This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07496896 1

STUART OF DUNLEATH.

A

Story of the Present Time.

BY THE

HON. CAROLINE NORTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE DREAM," ETC.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

82 CLIFF STREET.

MDCCCLI.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
401287
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1907

TO

HER MAJESTY,

SOPHIA FREDERIKA MATILDA,

QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS.

MADAM,

In availing myself of your Majesty's permission to dedicate these volumes to you, I may, perhaps, be permitted a few words by way of preface.

When an eloquent English writer of former times—the celebrated Jeremy Taylor—dedicated his "Holy Dying" to the Earl of Carberry, he said: "Because I much honor you, and because I would do honor to myself, I have written your name in the entrance of my book."

The sentiment Jeremy Taylor expressed is one which should inspire all dedications, and I can with the utmost sincerity affirm that it is the soul of my dedication to the Queen of Holland.

If an author should be happy in his dedication, who knows that whatever is valuable in his book will be surely valued; that whatever is true in description, or noble in feeling, or tender in sentiment, will find quick and ready response in the heart of the patron of his work; then I may well rest content, since it is not a pleasant chance, but an approved certainty, that I shall find in your Majesty, with an ardent sympathy, the most competent and indulgent of judges.

Nor can it be otherwise than a great addition to my pleasure, that, from your Majesty's complete familiarity with the English language, my heart will need no translator to convey its thoughts to yours.

The power of writing has always been to me an intense pleasure; it has been the best of my resources in hours of gloom; while the name of a writer in my native land is the only happy boast of my life.

Holding, as I do, that that power entails a certain responsibility, I have not ventured to present to my countrymen, or to offer to your Majesty, a mere romance—the weaving of idle thoughts to amuse idle hours. I have endeavored, at least, to write with a distinct purpose of usefulness. To illustrate the working of particular faults on our own destinies, and the destinies of others, and at the same time to uphold a wider toleration than we are generally willing to accord to such faults as do not happen to be those of our own individual nature.

If I have failed in making this purpose clear in my story, it is not for want of pains, but for want of ability; for, carelessly no part of this book has been written. Nor will I allow that pains and purpose are thrown away upon a work of fiction; since, from the early time of fables, Fiction has ever held the dignity of Embassador from the Court of Truth.

3896

I have done, therefore, what I could, in the line of writing which I have attempted. And since authorship is also a species of sovereignty; since a writer of any power is a governor of such hearts as his writings can reach; and thus I, as an author, govern a few hearts, while your Majesty governs many: I do but copy the good old custom of simple days, which bade the petty rulers of the earth bring tribute to the more mighty, and bring my tribute in the shape of this book.

I do not know that there remains any observation for me to make, unless it be one which more especially affects your private sympathies. When last I saw your Majesty, you were mourning a child of extraordinary beauty and promise. It may interest you to know that, in the description of the death of a child in the course of these volumes, the instance of early piety and resignation which prompted it to utter a prayer, instead of a vain call for rescue, is not an invention, but a fact taken from real life.

With earnest wishes for your Majesty's welfare and happiness, I now close this letter of dedication, assuring your Majesty, with little formality, but much respect, that I feel glad and thankful at being permitted to offer you this testimony of my gratitude and my affection.

Your Majesty's

Devoted Servant,

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH NORTON.

LONDON, 1851.

STUART OF DUNLEATH.

CHAPTER I.

A LETTER.

THE post had just come in.

A common-place every-day occurrence; connected in the general mind with pasted stamps and Christmas-boxes. No longer the romantic event it used to be, when, with piquant irregularity, unexpected messengers alighted from their reeking steeds at the gates of fair castles, and presented on bended knee, some solitary missive confided to their charge. A mere matter of course; not to be thought of in any other light.

And yet it is a startling reflection, that, at a particular hour of the morning, there is to thousands of the millions a second waking as it were; a waking of the heart after the waking of the body. Thousands are astir, each in his separate home; all occupied with a similar interest; the chief, perhaps the only point of sympathy, in their various lives.

The post is come in. "A noun of multitude, signifying many." The epistles which lay huddled together in the mail-bag, have been sorted and delivered according to their several addresses. They have been scattered along the rows of houses like seed in a plowed furrow, and according to the seed sown, is the crop raised; tears for some, and smiles for others; joy and grief, like unseen spirits, entering with the post.

The letters are come.

That far-traveled treasure, the ship-letter, with its news from distant climes; the love-letter; the remittance, or refusal to remit; the attorney's letter, with a threat of "ulterior measures," terrible in its vagueness; the maternal counsel; the keen and bitter reproach; the half-jesting, half-scandalous gossip, immediately to be repeated and multiplied as though a stereotyped edition were called for; the vain appeal, written with anguish, blotted with tears; the letter of empty compliment or ceremony; the black-edged, black-sealed, ominous-looking announcement of the death of a friend or relation—all these have arrived at their destination.

How troubled is the stream of life's waters as the spirit of the hour passes over its face. If we could look into those homes whose blank windows and closed doors wear so exactly the same aspect as they did an hour ago, what changes we might behold! There sits a matron weeping; her gentle girls are weeping too; they rose cheerfully this morning; all was as usual; the morning prayer, the household task, the plans for the morrow; but the storm has swept over them. They know themselves widowed and orphaned—since the post came in.

In the next house, hasty orders are given, preparations are being made for a sudden journey. Death, which came as a certainty to that other small family circle, only threatens here The absent son lies sick of a fever—delirious, perhaps dying; but there is hope. Are the horses come? how slowly the orders seem obeyed: all has been hurry, terror, and confusion, since the post came in.

Close by the shade is the sunshine; look into the dwelling opposite. A blushing girl is there, with her parents. She would fain cover her face with her hands, but they are playfully held by her father; smilingly, and yet tenderly he watches her downcast eyes, through whose shy lids his glance seems to pierce. The lover has proposed: he is accepted: she is happy, though she is to leave home. Home! she has had a vision of a "home of her own" since the post came in,

Despair, ruin, disgrace. The party-wall perhaps, alone divides her from a house where these have alighted, to crush some bankrupt speculator. He has received a letter and read it. He stares wildly on vacancy.

> "His eyes
> Are with his heart, and that is far away."

In fancy, he beholds the face of his daughter, innocent, dimpled, child-like. He sees his sons, handsome youths just entering manhood; he sees their mother, who has been his good true wife for near thirty years. Familiar faces glide along the blank wall opposite, like figures from some dreadful magic-lantern. He sits, now perplexed and trembling; now still and stony: there has been but one idea clear to him, the idea of SUICIDE—since the post came in.

Even to those who have not their part in the morning's distribution, the post-hour is an hour of interest. How often has it been waited for with sick heart-throbs, with bitter restless anxiety. How often, gliding by in barrenness, has it cast a shade of unutterable dejection on the dial of a sunless day. How often has its very emptiness done more to convince the reason of change, and loss, and wrong, and neglect, than all the jarring words that ever were penned. Reader! did you ever wait, longingly, feverishly, for the coming in of the post? If you have, I pity you. If you have not, I pity you yet more; for, of anxiety may truly be declared, what a French author has written of love:

> "Qui que tu sois, voilà ton maître;
> Il l'est, le fut; ou le doit être!"

On the morning from which this story dates its beginning, the post had just come in, in the retired village of Aspendale. The contents of the bag consisted principally of letters "for

Lady Raymond, Aspendale Park," which were put in a little leather pouch of their own, that they might travel in proper state from the village post-office to the hall door. There, the leather pouch being delivered to a footman in livery, and unlocked by a superior being who wore no livery, its contents were consigned to the lady's-maid, to be carried into the sacred precincts of "my lady's dressing-room."

Into that darkly-curtained and richly-carpeted apartment, the abigail entered with cautious tread. Avoiding the peck of a very large yellow-crested cockatoo; slightly noticing a crimson lory and a green monkey, who seemed to be old acquaintances; and dextrously steering her way through such shoals of little tables, footstools, and easy chairs, as would have completely barred the passage to any one less accustomed to that difficult navigation, she reached the sofa where her lady was reclining and laid the letters on the tables; saying, as she did so, with the interest of one who had been many years in the same service, "a letter from Madras among them, my lady."

As the letters were brought in, a fair fragile child of nine years old, rose from the stool by the sofa; and saying, with a sigh, "post-time, mamma, we must leave off talking," withdrew to the window, where a Hindoo Ayah was arranging some new toys, and sitting down on a low ottoman by the nurse's side, conversed with her in whispers. Even without the presence of the native servant, a stranger could have told, at a glance, that the occupant of that room had been in India. The peculiar furniture, the japanned cabinets, the tropical birds, the knick-knacks in sandal-wood, ebony, and ivory, the profusion of shawls and draperies, un-English in their look and texture; and still more, perhaps, the appearance of the delicate English child—all told the same tale.

Look well at that child, reader, for she is our heroine.

Pale, tranquil, with slight limbs, and bright, spiritual eyes full of that peculiar expression, at once wild, shy, and gentle, which the French denominate *fauve*, with a general air of feebleness and languor, redeemed by a look of thought and intellect in the straight, fine forehead, and a certain degree of pride in the small, melancholy mouth; a little taller than children of her age usually are; her hair a little longer, too, than is common, and plaited by the skillful fingers of the Ayah in countless slender braids. Such was Eleanor Raymond.

If you had met her out walking, muffled in her bonnet and shawl, you would not have noticed her. You met a pale, lady-like child, and that was all; but if you had seen her in a room—above all, if you had spoken to her, she would have remained forever shrined in that strange gallery of pictures which memory gradually collects. Your eye would never again have rested on any group of young children, without recalling to mind the child you once saw in Lady Raymond's dressing-room.

Little Eleanor sat still, and conversed kindly with her Ayah, but it was plain she was only half attentive to the efforts made to entertain her, and she glanced restlessly from time to time toward the sofa, as if waiting for the wheel of recall.

"I think," at length said she with a sigh, "I am growing too old for toys, Maya; I am very much obliged to Emma Fordyce for this Noah's Ark, but I wish I could give it to some little child—if I knew any little child," added she, in a plaintive tone. "I like only the dear elephant, because it reminds me of India and of papa, though there is no palanquin on its back; I wonder if the carpenter could make me a palanquin."

A sob from the lady who reclined on the sofa startled Eleanor; swift, gentle, noiseless, she flew across the room. "Mamma, dear mamma, what is the matter? Is there bad news? Is my brother Godfrey's ship—wrecked? Is papa ill?"

Lady Raymond kissed her daughter, and asked, in a low, trembling voice,

"Should you remember your papa if you were to see him?"

The little girl trembled also, and stood for a minute without speaking, gazing on the joy that sparkled in her mother's tearful eyes: then she spoke rapidly, eagerly, clasping her small hands together:

"If I remember him! Oh! dear mamma, how could I forget him? Sometimes I dream of the day he blessed me and bid me good-by. He blessed you too, mamma, and told you to write often, and take care of your health. I remember India very well, though I was a young child; I remember—"

Eleanor paused.

She was going to tell her mother she remembered her baby-brother; but she remembered also how her mother had wailed and wept when that babe was laid in its Indian grave, far away. With tender instinct she stopped, colored, and showed her consciousness of coloring, by the quick, graceful movement with which she laid the back of her little hand against her glowing cheek; then, twining her arms round her mother's neck, she said,

"Is papa coming home? I am sure that is the news; is he coming, mamma, at last?"

"He *is* coming, my own little Eleanor; he *is* coming at last—thank God."

And, folded in a close embrace, the happy mother and child rejoiced together, sobbing with glad excitement. The post had come in, and brought to the mother one hope, and a thousand memories—to the child, one memory, and hopes as countless as the motes that dance in a sunbeam. And truly, two more helpless beings than that invalid woman and her fragile daughter, never waited the coming of a father and protector.

CHAPTER II.

EXPECTATION.

Lady Raymond had been twice married. Her previous union had proved as unhappy as the present was fortunate. The pennyless daughter of a half-pay officer, her exquisite beauty had early captivated the heart of Captain Marsden, who wooed and won her in a period of five weeks. Neither could be presumed to know much of the other's disposition in this time, and no two dispositions could have been more dissimilar. Captain Marsden was a man of nice honor, and

generous feelings, but his temper was stern, imperious, and irritable; he had a constitution of iron, reverenced punctuality, and had a secret (and very unsailor-like) contempt for women in general, and for fragile and helpless women in particular. He desired to find in his wife the qualities he valued in his crew—activity and obedience; in his home, the exact order which is observed on board a man-of-war. His home and his wife were precisely contrary to these preconceived notions, and on the rock of this double disappointment the bark of affection was wrecked. Fear, and a sense of injury, took the place of love in the young wife's heart, who had been the spoiled idol of her surviving parent, and the beauty of a garrisoned sea-port town; weariness, anger, and something very near akin to disgust, took its place in the heart of Captain Marsden. Their mutual existence was embittered, and so continued till a rapid fever carried off Captain Marsden in the prime of life, leaving his widow with a little boy to educate, and a very narrow income.

Her beauty and gentleness attracted as many suitors as the obscure retirement in which she lived rendered possible; but her timid heart long dreaded to venture on a second choice; and when, at length, General Sir John Raymond proposed for the beautiful young widow, it was with a feeling in which fear contended with love, and many an anxious vow never to offend or disobey him, that she once more pronounced the fatal "yes," and became again, and under happier auspices, a wife.

The strength of her good resolves was not destined to be tried. Sir John Raymond, himself the widower of the haughtiest, cleverest, and most managing of women, found a charm in the very foibles of his new bride. Her gentleness, her helplessness, were pleasanter to him than the somewhat tyrannical stand-alone-ism of Lady Raymond the First. There was a disparity in their ages, too, which seemed to him to entitle her to indulgence; and when she looked timidly and anxiously toward him, conscious of some error which Captain Marsden would have sternly reproved, and saw the kind and amused smile with which he met her perplexed glances, she felt a sweet consciousness of being so beloved, that her faults were no longer justly weighed.

She returned that love with a sort of tender worship, and something like wonder at her being held worthy to inspire attachment in a man so superior to all whom she had ever known. Life, which had threatened to be full of storms that terrified and depressed her, wore the tranquil brightness of a summer's day; and the care of her little boy, Godfrey Marsden, which had been a happiness full of fitful alarm, and oppressive responsibility, became a source of maternal pride and security, shared, as it now was, with the generous-hearted protector, in whose strength there was no sternness, in whose love, no tyranny.

As the boy grew, his character and inclination seemed alike to point to the choice of his father's profession; and Lady Raymond, with a mixture of awe and triumph, saw her son stand before her in a midshipman's uniform, his sword by his side, exhibiting in his frank, courageous countenance something of the hard determination which she remembered in her husband's face—an expression she had admired as bold and manly, while he was yet only a suitor for her hand, but which experience had taught her to watch with shrinking timidity in after years.

With steady kindness, Sir John Raymond did his best for the little fellow he first recollected seeing with a black crape round his hat, an orphan under very helpless tutelage; and Godfrey Marsden creditably pursued the career pointed out for him. His courage and obedience had already obtained favorable notice from his superior officers; and if he was less popular with his companions, that might arise from a gravity and reserve unusual at his age, and utterly unwelcome in the larking, riotous, merry world of a midshipmen's mess-room.

An important command in India having been bestowed on Sir John, he sailed for that land of the tropics, accompanied by his gentle wife; and at first their happiness seemed without a cloud: but after some time, Lady Raymond's health, which had never been robust, completely gave way; and to this was superadded grief for the loss of two or three little delicate children, who seemed only born to die. Sir John Raymond's popularity also declined: reforms were projected and introduced; and the usual fate of those who are intrusted with the execution of measures abroad, which are so smoothly planned at home, became his. The odium of all which was unwelcome in the new arrangements was attributed to him, while for that which was satisfactory he obtained no credit. Harassed by public struggles and private anxieties, he thought of retiring from his arduous position, and returning, with his wife and surviving children, from the sultry and oppressive climate where he vainly labored to serve his fellow-creatures, to the pure air of his native land; while his ministerial friends at home, convinced that the fault could not lie in their scheme (on the perfection of which they had all complimented each other) but that "somehow or other Raymond must have managed very foolishly," thought of recalling him. The difficulty, however, of finding a man able to fill his place, prevented this insult from being added to the numerous vexations which already oppressed him, while a high and chivalrous sense of duty equally restrained him from voluntarily throwing up his command.

Meanwhile his infant son died; and the long and dangerous fever which this great affliction brought on Lady Raymond, made her husband resolve immediately to send her with little Eleanor to England. A friend was commissioned to choose and prepare a residence for the helpless object of his anxious love, and Aspendale Park was taken.

At their melancholy parting, Sir John Raymond for the first time wished his wife had been more capable of comprehending his affairs and anxieties; there was much he would have said, which the character and understanding of the woman he had married, rendered superfluous or impossible, and which was checked back under that conviction. He could neither explain the past, nor urge hope for the future, nor theorize on the education of his little daughter, to the feeble being who was about to be separated from him. He could only entreat of her to write constantly, and to not let his child forget

him; accompany her on board to see that her cabin was furnished with every comfort and luxury for the voyage, and then return with a heavy heart to land—the land which now held for him, only the graves of his children.

Lady Raymond returned to England a confirmed invalid; her natural indolence increased tenfold by the relaxing climate she had lived in; and by a certain sadness, which made inactivity more complete as a habit, than it was, even with her, while yet the elasticity of youth and happiness remained. She lived a torpid life, feebly sunned by the distant hope of Sir John's return. The only exertion she was ever known to make, was that of writing letters to him. Very long, and very foolish, were the letters Lady Raymond wrote, and such as a stranger would have thought it impossible to wade through; yet they were read many times by him to whom they were addressed, and always before he broke the seal of any other epistle: and the proud, intellectual, distinguished general, whose services were so valuable to his native country, and whose position was so brilliant in his land of exile, sighed for the time when, the noonday labor of existence being over, he might spend its sunset and decline with his wife and child, in his distant English home.

No wonder that Lady Raymond watched anxiously for his arrival after nearly four years' absence! No wonder she roused herself to walk down the lime avenue in the park, and strained her eyes for the expected glimpse of a carriage through the trees, in a distant turn of the road. And no wonder that, after watching till all grew dim and indistinct in the twilight, forgetful of her usual fears of evening dew and fatigue, she called, in a broken, disappointed tone, to little Eleanor, to accompany her back to the house, and wept as she sat down in the large, comfortable dressing-room, which had never seemed cheerless till that evening.

CHAPTER III.

ELEANOR'S GUARDIAN.

THE Gazette of the next morning contained the following piece of intelligence, which was read with melancholy interest by hundreds to whom he was personally unknown:

"Arrived H.M.S. 'Albion,' from Madras, having on board the body of General Sir John Raymond, K.C.B., who died on his passage home."

Lady Raymond did not get the papers till the day after their delivery in town. She spent that day, therefore, as she had spent the preceding, in anxious expectation of the arrival of her husband. The feverish and restless suspense exhausted her, and toward evening she flung herself on a sofa, and fell asleep. She woke with a start; the sound of carriage-wheels rapidly driving up to the door was heard; and little Eleanor flew into the room, exclaiming: "Now, mamma, here is papa! here is papa!" The door-bell rang; the bark of the house-dog was answered by the little spaniel, which jumped off its cushion, and ran into the hall; servants with lights passed to and fro; all was bustle and confusion.

Lady Raymond disentangled herself from the shawls with which the care of her attendants had encumbered the sofa, and went trembling down stairs.

A gentleman entered at the open door. He was a stranger. She looked eagerly into the dark space beyond him, but no one followed. The servant closed the hall-door, and opened that of the library, into which they mechanically entered.

"Sir John Raymond is scarcely well enough to travel," said the stranger in a low voice, and with a slight Scotch accent; "in fact, he is very ill, and he sent me—"

"Is there a letter? have you no letter?" said Lady Raymond, wildly interrupting him.

"I have not," replied he, with some hesitation.

She fixed her eyes with an imploring stare on his face, and as he attempted to continue, she exclaimed:

"He is dead! If he had been alive, he would have written, if it was only to say, 'I can not come!' Ah, God! you are trying to break it to me; but I feel it here!" and pressing her hand against her heart, she sank with hysterical sobs to the ground.

The stranger raised her, and rang for assistance. Several terrified servants crowded in.

"Carry Lady Raymond to her own room, and send for a doctor; and, stay, is there any friend, any neighbor, within reach, who could be a comfort at this terrible time?"

"No, sir," said the lady's maid. My lady didn't take much to the people about here; she didn't see company."

"There's old Mr. Fordyce, the rector, father to Miss Emma, that's as good as my lady's daughter-in-law," said the housekeeper.

Lady Raymond moaned, and half opened her eyes.

"Carry her up stairs; tell her I will see her in the morning; and send for Mr. Fordyce," said the stranger.

No one thought of disputing the orders so unexpectedly given, by a gentleman whom they had never seen before. Lady Raymond was borne to her own room; a messenger was dispatched for Mr. Fordyce, and the apothecary, who lived within a stone's throw of the rectory; and without further ceremony the stranger was left alone. The gloomy darkness of the library was only relieved by a single candle, which one of the servants had left on the table; the door of the room remained open. The stranger took two or three turns through the apartment, and then re-seating himself, covered his face with his hands. Little Eleanor stole quietly in, and advanced toward him.

"What has happened, and where is papa?" faltered she.

"Child," said the stranger, solemnly, as he took her hand, "your father is in heaven, if ever man went there!"

Little Eleanor wept and trembled while he explained to her that her father had left India in bad health, and had died at sea; that she was now an orphan; and that he, David Stuart, who had been Sir John's friend and secretary, was to be her guardian, and had come to Aspendale in the vain hope of being able to break the dreadful news better by word of mouth, than by writing to her poor mother.

As the little girl stood shivering and weeping by his side, David Stuart's soul was pierced with anguish. He took the child in his arms, and spoke to her tenderly of her father's goodness and worth; of the duty of bowing to God's will, of the especial providence over the widow and orphan.

His tone and manner, more than his words, hushed her grief for a while, and she leaned her head silently against his bosom. As he held her there, with a gentle cherishing clasp, he thought of the miserable scene he had witnessed in the death of his friend and benefactor, and the misery he was yet to witness in this home which was to have been the scene of such welcome and rejoicing, where the hope of a happy re-union and calm glad future was forever blotted out by tears and death. Sorrow overcame him; and with a gush of weeping he kissed the helpless little creature who lay in his arms. She, too, had been dreaming, in her own childish way, of the desolation which had overtaken her and her mother; of all the joyous preparations they had made in vain.

"Oh! never to see papa again! never again!" sobbed she; "what shall we do! we were so glad in the morning!"

The renewed attempt which he made to soothe her, was interrupted by the entrance of the housekeeper, who inquired if he would take any refreshment, and whether it was his intention to remain there that night; adding a hope that he would, as "her lady was so delicate, they really thought that the blow would be the death of her;" and that she might require to hear the particulars when she became more composed.

"Mr. Fordyce is come, sir," said another servant, entering hastily; "he would like to speak with you before he goes to my lady—he is in the drawing-room; this way, sir. What name shall I give?"

"Stuart."

As the stranger slowly crossed the hall, and ascended the staircase, he heard the order to prepare an apartment for "the gentleman who brought the news," answered by an interrogative observation from the chambermaid, that "the room which had been got ready for Sir John, was in order—wouldn't that do?" and the housekeeper's reply, "Lord bless me, girl, what put such a thought into your head! I am going this moment to shut the shutters of that room, and lock it up for good and all. Come, Miss Eleanor—come away to bed; bless me, how the poor child has cried. Put her to bed, nurse—take her away, and put her to bed, poor lamb. She'll sleep as sound as if her father had come home; it's the nature of her age. Get ready the blue room on the ground floor, next the library, for Mr. What's-his-name; and, John, bring a tray for some wine and water; really one scarcely knows what one's doing, hearing things in this sudden way."

CHAPTER IV.

DEATH IN EXILE.

THERE was a desolate silence at Aspendale the *next morning*. The window-shutters were closed: every one spoke in whispers; those whose occupation obliged them to move to and fro in the house, did it stealthily and cautiously, as if they feared to wake one who lay in slumber. The stillness and solemn hush of death was there, instead of the jubilee of welcome. The mighty and oppressive silence which follows the falling asleep of those whom no earthly sound shall ever rouse again.

David Stuart sat alone at the breakfast-table. The room had a southeast aspect, and the morning sun shone cheerfully on the objects around him; glowing through the rich crimson draperies of the windows, and lighting some warm Italian landscapes, with which the walls were hung. There was an air of preparation in the apartment which added to its gayety, and large vases of flowers had been placed in it by the careful hands of the housekeeper the day that Sir John Raymond was expected. While he looked on these things with a sad and abstracted eye, the butler entered and placed the newspapers on the table. As he listlessly glanced over them, he saw the announcement of Sir John Raymond's death; and though he had himself accompanied the invalid on his tedious voyage home; though to his ear were confided the last whispers of the dying man; though he had arrived at Aspendale for no other purpose than to break the news of that death to Lady Raymond, he started, as though the intelligence had been unexpected. It is so long before we become as it were assured of the loss of those we value.

Vague and imperfect as our ideas of that terrible separation, are the first feelings which attend it. We grieve, indeed; but while we grieve, there is a want of reality and certainty in our sorrow. We repeat to ourselves that they are lost—gone—vanished forever; and even while we repeat it, feel as though they might return. For months, the possibility of writing to them, lingers vaguely in our minds: they seem absent, not buried. We recollect that they are dead, with a burst of weeping, when this mechanical impulse is passed. It is not till lonely seasons have revolved; till joys which they would have shared, anxieties which they might have alleviated, events in which they would have their part, have all been our portion, and ours only; till the grasp of welcome or congratulation has been long unfelt; till the opinions we used to value, have been long unasked; till we have stood in some trial of life, and felt the want of our accustomed counselor and friend, that we thoroughly comprehend the world of separation, and bereavement, contained in that short phrase, "He is dead!"

David Stuart withdrew his eyes from the paper, and leaving his untasted and solitary meal, he walked to the window. Little Eleanor was in the garden, wandering sadly to and fro; she paused as she perceived her new acquaintance, and smiled mournfully. David called to her.

"How is your mamma, Eleanor? Is she better?"

"It is not my time yet to see mamma," said the child; "but they tell me she is very ill because of that bad news, and that she will not come out of her dark dressing-room all day."

"Well, you will see her in her room presently,

and I want you to carry a letter to her; wait for me."

Taking a packet from the table, he passed from the open window into the garden, and joined Eleanor: he led her by the hand in silence for a few steps, and sat down with her on a rustic bench.

"Eleanor," said he, "your father told me you understood very easily what was said to you. This is his dying letter; the last he ever wrote; and he was so weak that it took him three days to finish it; and this other paper holds some of his hair. I wish you to take these to your mamma. I do not like to send them by one of the servants; and I am a stranger, and perhaps your mamma may not wish to see me for some days, and yet there is something I must know before I go to town. Take them to her, and say that David Stuart sent you, and earnestly desires to know what he can do to serve and assist her in this bitter time of affliction. And try to comfort her, for remember she has nothing in the world now but you."

"And Godfrey, my brother—she has Godfrey! I can not comfort mamma as he could—oh, no;" and she shook her head, as her eyes filled with tears.

David Stuart looked at her with strange interest.

"Well," said he, gently, "you can only do your best. Come to me in the library when you have given the letter, and tell me the answer."

The little girl took the papers, and with a grave and earnest glance toward the still closed shutters of her mother's room, she turned her steps toward the house. It was true, as her father had said, that her understanding was beyond her years; and she executed her message with a tact and fidelity which might have surprised those who have never witnessed the precocity, both of feeling and comprehension, which children who are brought up alone, that is, without companions of their own age, frequently display. She repeated, nearly in his own words, the short explanation he had given; put the packet into her mother's hands, opened a part of the shutter to allow the light to fall on the letter, and sat down on the low stool by her couch to await her reply.

Lady Raymond broke the seal, and through the bitter, blinding tears which gushed from her eyes, she read the last farewell of him who had been to her, husband, father, protector, and friend. The letter ran as follows:

"My beloved Clara—It is now two days since Dr. Randolph informed me that I had better prepare for the worst; and if I had any arrangements to make for you and my child, or any message to leave, that I should lose no time in committing them to paper. I am so weak today, that I begin to believe him; and I write to you, though I can hardly think it possible that I am indeed to die without embracing you! To die within so few days' sail of England! perhaps in sight of shore! This is a very bitter trial; but it is God's will, and we may not murmur. My health had been declining very rapidly for some months before I left India; but *knowing how delicate* and easily alarmed *you are, I forbore all mention of this* in my letters, *wishing that you should only* hear of my illness, when you could nurse me through my expected recovery. I feel this concealment, alas! will only make the blow of my death fall heavier upon you; but you will forgive me, knowing that I meant all for the best, and that it was to spare you pain and anxiety that all was done. The news will be broken to you by one to whose tenderness I owe much; the son of my old friend Stuart of Dunleath. I have already spoken of him so often in my letters home, that I hope he will scarcely seem a stranger. Your gentle nature will feel an interest in him, as the son of the woman who was the object of my boyish adoration; that most beautiful, most noble-hearted creature, whose vain efforts to stave off the ruin brought on by poor Stuart's reckless extravagance and vanity; whose steady self-denial, calm courage, and devotion to her children, first taught me to value the worth of women, as it is the misfortune of some men, from less holy associations, to be unable to value them. Her death, and the forced sale of Dunleath, quite broke down what little nerve hard drinking and wearing anxieties had left to Stuart, and I believe he was in a sad state before he died. I think there is much of his mother in David. Personally he is her living image. When I proposed to him, in the wreck and ruin which surrounded him, to be my secretary, I half expected the Highland Laird's blood to revolt, as his father's did, at even a rational scheme of independence. But I was mistaken. He has inherited his mother's patient energy, untiring sweetness of temper, and sane, honest views of life. During the four years he has been with me (your absence leaving me only the shadow of a home) I have become attached to him as to a son, and he has shown me the devotion that might bless a father. I think, young as he is for such duties, I can not leave the care of your destiny and that of little Eleanor in better hands. Her fortune will be large, for old Raymond of Raymondville, my Calcutta grand-uncle, whose property I have just inherited, wills that it shall descend to her. He left a large sum of ready money besides, which I was to employ in the purchase of land, or in any way I pleased.

"My dear Clara, I have left fourteen thousand pounds of this money to your son by your first marriage, Godfrey Marsden. I have left ten thousand to David Stuart. Eleanor will inherit from the Calcutta fortune certainly not less than five thousand a year, and your income will exceed three thousand. I leave you, therefore, without suffering those worldly anxieties which often cumber and distress the souls of departing men. You will have to suffer none of the privations and struggles of your first widowhood, my poor, gentle, delicate Clara! I am thankful also to be able to serve your son: the young lieutenant may now, I think, marry Emma Fordyce, without the charge of imprudence. He stands high on the list for promotion. If his manhood fulfill the promise of the boy, you will have great cause to be proud of him: greater courage, and a sterner and more exact sense of duty I never saw in a young lad: God bless him for your sake. And now God bless you, my Clara, for we are come to our last farewell! God bless and take charge of you and my orphan child. God keep and sustain you through the first trial of bereavement, and the lone years to

come. Strive to bow to His will, and put your trust in His mercy, as I do, even in this hour of unutterable dejection. There is a life beyond the grave, and we shall meet in a better world. In all temporal difficulties, great or small, David Stuart will take my place as your adviser and protector; cherish him as you would cherish a brother; teach my child to respect and look up to him; and never forget that to his ear was whispered the blessing I pined to bestow on my distant wife and little one; that his hand was the last that pressed the hand of the exile whom it was God's will should die, in sight of shore! His love and care have soothed the bitterness of the death-hour, as his fidelity and energy eased the last struggling years of my service in India. I do not know what more a son could have done for me than he has done; and as a son, rather than a friend, I bequeath you to him: a sacred trust, which he will sacredly fulfill. God bless you, now and ever, and God's will be done.

"Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN RAYMOND."

A memorandum of the last moments of the good, generous-hearted protector she had lost, was appended to the letter. After writing it he had sunk rapidly, and many hours of the two lingering days which followed, passed in apparent unconsciousness. On the third morning at sunrise he rallied a little, and begged to be carried on deck; some demur was made, on account of his state of excessive weakness. He smiled sadly at the surgeon, and said,

"This will be, as you well know, my last request."

He was carried up in his hammock as he lay. The bright, glorious sunshine of morning dazzled his weak eyes, and he closed them for some minutes. Then, feebly pressing David Stuart's hand, he pointed tremblingly to the white line of cliff already visible far over the sea.

"England!" said he, "Home!"

The plaintive tone entered Stuart's heart like a sword. For a long time no other word was spoken. Then, some murmured observation on the delicious freshness of the morning breeze, hovered on the lips of the dying man: then an hour of silence. The surge of the water as the ship cut her way through, and the flapping of some half-filled sail, as the wind gradually fell to a calm, were the only sounds. The broad sun brightened over the ocean; the day wore on. Sir John Raymond sighed restlessly, then with sudden energy he said,

"Guard them truly, they are so helpless: my Clara—my poor little Eleanor—guard my Eleanor!"

It was the last quiver of the expiring lamp, and the lamp went out.

Eleanor returned to David Stuart with her mother's vague broken-hearted answers. She did not know, she did not care, what was to be done. She left every thing to Mr. Stuart. She did not want to see him. She would rather not see him—there was nothing more to ask, or to know, or to care about, in this world. The funeral and the settlement of affairs were for him to arrange. She did not wish to read lawpapers; she would not understand them if she did. She understood her beloved husband's letter; it told *her all she wanted to know*. She hoped, if Mr. Stuart was going away, he would come back and stay at Aspendale till she was better. She could not attend to any thing; her son Godfrey was at sea; and she was afraid of dying and leaving Eleanor alone in the house. Sir John had explained that Mr. Stuart was to act in his stead, and she hoped he would forgive her if she begged him not to leave her in this awful hour, more than was necessary. She had rather not have little Eleanor with her much. She would rather be alone. She would be very thankful if Mr. Stuart would write to her son Godfrey, to tell him the dreadful news, and ask when his ship could return home. She was too ill to think about any thing more. She begged Eleanor to leave her.

"Helpless, indeed!" thought David Stuart; as the child, not without tears, innocently repeated her mother's broken sentences. Then, wiping her eyes, she said, "But I will be no trouble to you; indeed, if, as mamma thinks, you are going to be very busy, I think I could take some trouble for you. I could certainly write that letter to Godfrey; Mr. Fordyce says I write very well; or I could copy any letters for you; I copied once a whole sermon for Mr. Fordyce, and he gave me a Bible with silver clasps. He is my only friend. I am very dull when I can not go to him. Will you let me do something for you? I would be glad to do any thing for you, papa's friend."

The child timidly and yet tenderly laid her hand on his, and looked up in his face. David Stuart knew nothing of children. Pity, wonder, and a sort of embarrassment at the strangeness of his own position, kept him silent. He took her hand, and looked at it as if it had been a little white shell gathered on a strange shore; musing. The echo of her tender tone, calling him "papa's friend," as if it were a name, lingered in his ear: the tears gathered in his eyes.

"Oh! Eleanor," said he, "I loved your father, and he loved me; but I shall never be able to protect you as he would have done."

CHAPTER V.

DAVID STUART'S WARD.

THE only other person named by Sir John Raymond as trustee, a distant relation of his own, had died in a fit of apoplexy, some time before the arrival of the Albion. David Stuart found himself therefore sole executor and guardian to Eleanor. Never was man more puzzled or more interested than he, with the charge of the little daughter of his benefactor. He marveled at her intelligence; grown persons are apt to put a lower estimate than is just on the understandings of children. They rate them by what they know, and children know very little. But their capacity of comprehension is great. Hence the continual wonder of those who are unaccustomed to them, at the "old-fashioned ways" of some lone little one who has no playfellows—and at the odd mixture of folly and wisdom in its sayings. A continual battle goes on in a child's mind, between what it knows and what it comprehends. Its answers are foolish from partial ignorance, and wise from extreme quickness of apprehension. The great

art of education is so to train this last faculty as neither to depress nor over exert it. The matured mediocrity of many an infant prodigy, proves both the degree of expansion to which it is possible to force a child's intellect, and the boundary which nature has set to the success of such false culture.

Eleanor Raymond might with little trouble have been trained into one of these diseased specimens of perfection. She was living in that melancholy exile, a child cleverer than the grown people round her; and the efforts made by her mind, were like the efforts made by a plant to shoot upward toward the air and light. Her "only friend," as she expressed it, was old Mr. Fordyce, the clergyman of Aspendale, whose daughter was betrothed to her brother Godfrey. His heart had yearned toward the little neglected child, left so much by her invalided mother, to the care of her Hindoo Ayah and the servants of the household. As the half sister of the man to whom he was to intrust his own child's future, Mr. Fordyce thought it his "bounden duty" to do what he could for Eleanor. Good old Mr. Fordyce! he thought it was his duty to give up his whole life to the service of his fellow creatures, and the little time he was able to spare from his avocations as parish priest, had for the last three years been devoted to Eleanor. Ever since one day, when passing through the garden, he found the child sitting staring listlessly at some sunflowers, with so sad an expression in her eyes, that he inquired what was the matter. Nothing was the matter, but she had no book to read, no one to talk with, nothing to do, and her mother was too languid to have her constantly in the room with her.

David Stuart followed Mr. Fordyce's footsteps. In that very garden, shaded from the sunshine by an old yew, at the end of one of the broad graveled walks, little Eleanor read to her guardian the sermon she had copied. No monk who ever executed an illuminated manuscript, in times when such works were a marvel of beauty and tedious care, could feel more pride in the completion of his task than she did. No lover ever listened at twilight to the voice of his lady fair, with more rapt and tender attention than David Stuart to the voice of the child.

"The text is, 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.' You must remember the text," said she.

David Stuart did remember it. Years afterward, when many other memories were swept from his mind like the traces on sand beneath the waves, he yet remembered that text and the reading of old Mr. Fordyce's sermon!

With Mr. Fordyce himself, he formed a close friendship. It was a great pleasure, a mutual pleasure, this meeting of two cultivated minds, in the retirement of Aspendale; and the old man was never so cheerful as when Mr. Stuart came to the rectory, and sat with him in the little parlor he had fitted up as a library.

David belonged, too, to a family well known to Mr. Fordyce in early life. He was a Scotchman, and there is a brotherhood among Scotchmen, which the English (as far as I have seen in the various corners of the world) carefully avoid imitating.

The old clergyman thought David Stuart so charming, *that he wished he had* a son like him; and in the recesses of his simple heart, he questioned whether it was prudent to allow his little common-place daughter Emma, to compare him so constantly with her recollections of Godfrey Marsden. It was a needless fear. The little common-place daughter never gave David Stuart a thought, further than being glad her father had found a pleasant companion; but her thoughts wandered very often from all objects round her, to the visionary image of a ship sailing homeward, indifferently manned by the one sole image of its first lieutenant.

The orphan child of Sir John Raymond, was a frequent subject of discussion between her new friend and her old one. She throve under their mutual tutelage, and from being a very grave, reserved child, became very gay and playful. She was no longer in a sort of prison, body and soul; she had escaped from the palisades of mediocrity which surrounded her mind, just as she had gained the privilege of walking past the park and garden, down to the wild, broken scenery of a spot called the roaring Linn; a spot greatly admired by tourists—where a waterfall of great height, flinging itself forever into the great, black, shining pool below, filled her young imagination with pleasurable awe.

For some time it had been a question whether she ought not to have had a governess; but months crept on: Lady Raymond seemed to droop more and more under the burden of her great sorrow; David Stuart remained, by her earnest request, domiciled at Aspendale; and no new arrangements were entered into. Till Lady Raymond's health amended, till he left Aspendale he would educate the child of his benefactor himself. He had no profession, no employment, nothing to call him from this duty. Since the ruin of his father, the death of his mother, and the sale of Dunleath, he had had no occupation but that of being Sir John Raymond's secretary. His only occupation now, was that of Eleanor's guardian. Dear little child, why not be her tutor and guardian in one? Why avail himself so formally of his right, as to make her over immediately to a stranger? It would be time enough to think about governesses when he left Aspendale.

It was settled then, that Eleanor and David Stuart should be constant companions. His meals were no longer solitary. Her light feet tripped along the path, in his after-dinner saunter in the beautiful garden. Her eyes looked gladly across the breakfast-table, proud of being allowed to make tea for him. Her small, glossy head might be seen bending over its book in a corner of the library, whenever he looked up from his own studies. Dearly he loved the child; dearly he loved those eyes that were so like her father's, but without the shadows of care and anxiety, which had darkened his well-remembered glance.

A child's eyes! those clear wells of undefiled thought, what on earth can be more beautiful? Full of hope, love, and curiosity, they meet your own. In prayer, how earnest; in joy, how sparkling; in sympathy, how tender; the man who never tried the companionship of a little child, has carelessly passed by one of the great pleasures of life, as one passes a rare flower, without plucking it or knowing its value. A child can not understand you, you think. Speak to it of the holy things of your religion, of your grief for

the loss of a friend, of your love for some one you fear will not love in return: it will take, it is true, no measure or soundings of your thought; it will not judge how much you should believe; whether your grief is rational in proportion to your loss; whether you are worthy or fit to attract the love which you seek; but its whole soul will incline to yours, and engraft itself, as it were, on the feeling which is your feeling for the hour. David Stuart had not been three months in the house, before little Eleanor comprehended, that the most loving memory of his heart was the memory of his mother—the great grief of his heart, the loss of Dunleath. She thought much and tenderly of people and places she had never seen. She loved to read descriptions of Highland scenery. Every nook in Walter Scott's novels was a shadow of Dunleath. She loved to listen to her guardian's account of boyish days, when his mother taught him; the lesson-books lying on a beautiful sculptured sun-dial, which had once been a Greek altar, and which his father had imported at great expense, with many copies of celebrated statues, from Italy. She loved to hear him describe Dunleath, as it was then; so cared for, so adorned; and she loved to hear him describe it as it was the last melancholy day he saw it, after it had been vainly advertised for sale, by the writer who had bought it; after Stuart had been long away, and only returned to look at it before he sailed for India. How, then, all was forlorn, neglected, and deserted; how the heavy untrained roses lay tangled across the damp green paths, and the passion-flowers hung broken from the walls; how the statues stood gleaming under the firs, like ghosts of past prosperity; how the weeds and nettles had so sprung up by the sun-dial and his mother's favorite seat, that he stopped to root them up, and kissed the dial where she had so often leaned her beautiful head on her hand, watching the children at play. He spoke of his brothers, and a sister, all now dead. He repeated to Eleanor that touching and perfect poem of Mrs. Hemans, "The Graves of a Household," and explained how it was, that although

> "They grew together side by side,
> And filled one home with glee,
> Their graves were severed far and wide,
> By mount, and stream, and sea."

He felt no embarrassment at describing these things to the little child, as he would have felt with one of his own age; nor was he ashamed to shed tears before her. Perhaps some of the most soothing moments he had experienced for years, were spent in this outpouring of the heart to one who comprehended nothing but his grief. She knew not his broken-hearted mother's trials, his selfish father's extravagance. She only knew that Dunleath was lovely; that it had passed away into the hands of the stranger; that her guardian had no mother, sister, or parents now. And, oh! what a world of compassion swelled up from the pure fountain of the child's heart as she listened to the sorrows of the grown man!

Day by day this strange tranquil life glided on. Lady Raymond lived sorrowful and secluded. David Stuart visited Mr. Fordyce, and taught and trained his dead benefactor's child. Some curiosity was excited in the neighborhood about Sir John *Raymond's secretary*, but it soon died away. He neither seemed to seek nor to shun acquaintances—but it was evident he had no interest in any thing out of Aspendale. He studied much, he sketched; he played the piano; an accomplishment common among foreigners, though rare among our own countrymen, which he had acquired from his mother in his desultory education at Dunleath. He went out to the rectory, and was welcomed by the pious old man; he came home to Aspendale, and was welcomed by the fond little girl. It was an innocent, a happy time; happier than any he had ever known since Dunleath was sold to strangers, and his mother laid in her grave—happier, perhaps, than he ever knew again in all the years of a prolonged life.

CHAPTER VI.

EDUCATION.

It was winter: the crisp snow lay on the broad gravel-walks in the garden, and icicles hung on the cold, black bushes that grew by the roaring Linn, when little Eleanor, with a flushed cheek and an anxious countenance, entered the library where her guardian was reading.

"Guardie," said she, abruptly, "news is come from Godfrey; his ship is on its way home; he will be here soon; mamma is very glad. Oh! I ought not to think of myself at such a time, but I am never much to mamma, and now you will see I shall be *nothing!*"

She pressed her slender hands on her eyes, and sobbed aloud. David Stuart was surprised and disturbed.

"Are you jealous of your brother—you, my little, good Eleanor? I could not have believed it!"

"No, no! I am not jealous; I am sure I am not. It is he—that is—I can not explain; but he always corrects me, and thinks me foolish, and points out to mamma what he thinks are my faults; and mamma is so fond of him! oh, so fond!—you can not think how fond she is of Godfrey: wait till you see!

Lieutenant Marsden arrived, and David Stuart *did* see how fond the poor, feeble widow was of her son. There is, among some statistical records of madness lately published, an account of a woman who went mad from pride in her child, and imagined herself the mother of one of the seraphim. Lady Raymond just stopped short of the point of insanity. She did not imagine herself the mother of a seraph, but she certainly thought human perfection had reached its *acme*, in the good-looking, stern, square-shouldered young officer she had the happiness to call her son. What he said was law; his very step had a quarter-deck brevity and decision about it, as if he were forever about to issue a command. He treated his mother with a protecting and superior tenderness, which he reversed into a stern criticism for every other human being, not excepting his affianced bride. He treated Eleanor as his father had treated his mother during their brief, unhappy union; in days he could not remember, but of which he gave, in his own manner, so exact a copy, as sometimes surprises those who think habits are not hereditary, and who will not admit that

habits are, in fact, a part of our nature and disposition—the outward covering of the soul.

Lady Raymond, again, gave an example of a yet more marvelous and equally-common working of the human heart. She idolized the son who was the exact counterpart of the husband who had seemed odious to her. She never perceived or admitted that there was tyranny or injustice in that method of treating Eleanor, which she herself had once found it so difficult to endure. She was proud of her son; proud of his unflinching endurance of hardship, and courage in danger; proud of his seamanship and acknowledged ability in his profession; proud of his stern, uncompromising rectitude; proud even of his looks, and his personal strength; proud of his familiar acquaintance with every line of Holy Writ; proud of the pharisaical excellence of his conduct and character.

And in all these various causes of pride, Godfrey Marsden concurred. He was clothed (under his lieutenant's uniform) in a perfect panoply of self-satisfaction. If he set himself up as a judge of all other men, it was that he was better than all other men, and he knew it. To say that his little common-place Emma concurred also in these views, would be to express but feebly the entire and undoubted conviction in her mind that he was a faultless model of what man should be. Most unnecessary would it have been to preach to her the text, "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands." She had been a dutiful, submissive child to her fond, benevolent father, and she was prepared to be a submissive wife to her lover. In her heart, so far from regretting the indulgence of her first home, or looking with awe to the second, she thought there was something grand in Godfrey's sternness. Feeble natures respect even exaggerated energies; the contrast strikes them as a superiority.

David Stuart found himself almost immediately in collision, as it were, with the son of Sir John Raymond's widow. Perfect tact, natural sweetness of temper, and a strong anxiety not to offend or grieve, the poor, sorrowful, faded being, whose face had, since the return of the young sailor, begun to wear unwonted smiles, in vain contended in his heart with the position into which he was suddenly thrown. Godfrey, who appeared somewhat surprised at finding him a resident at Aspendale, cross-questioned him about Sir John Raymond's affairs, as though he were appointed merely to transact business, and arrange for Lady Raymond. He prefaced his questions always by saying:

"It is necessary, in order that I may know exactly how to advise my mother as to her future plans, that I should be made aware," &c.

He interfered in every step that had been taken, or was proposed to be taken, for little Eleanor. He ridiculed the notion of a man educating a girl, and named a lady (sister to the first mate on board his own ship) as an eligible governess. He found fault; he argued; he catechised. He scolded the little girl incessantly; sometimes for being too shy, sometimes for being too bold, sometimes for being indolent, sometimes for romping; twice, till she wept, for not knowing the sense of some erudite Scriptural quotation: once, for the involuntary error of *being too tall for her age*. David Stuart thought Lady Raymond's son perfectly insufferable. Lady Raymond began to fear her little daughter would require a very strict governess, indeed.

Fortunately, the preparations for his marriage stopped these experimental cruises of Godfrey's, by directing his thoughts to one desired haven. The liberal bequest of Sir John Raymond had enabled him to fulfill his engagement with Emma Fordyce sooner than he hoped, and the young, stern sailor was very happy. So was Lady Raymond; so was Emma.

Somehow little Eleanor caught a cold and fever about this time. David Stuart thought the church had been too chill for her the day of the wedding. Godfrey Marsden held that she had sickened the day after she visited some poor cottages in the neighborhood. He objected to these visitings. It encouraged the poor to depend on uncertain resources, on the aid of their richer neighbors.

"I am of opinion that their richer neighbors ought to help them, and that the reliance you speak of is a bond of union between the upper and lower classes," said David.

"You destroy all industry and independence, that's all I mean to say."

"My dear Mr. Marsden, there is much talk of the self-dependence of the poor, I wish we could point to the self-dependence of the rich, as an example for them to imitate; and not reserve even begging, on a large scale, as an indulgence sacred to the gentry. Which of us can say, they never at any time asked aid? Not, perhaps, in money, but a word from a great man, or—"

"I can!" interrupted Godfrey; "and I tell you, you will pauperize the whole village, besides teaching my sister false notions of duties to the poor. What has she to do with the poor of Aspendale?"

David Stuart smiled and sighed. He was thinking of the assistance to Godfrey's whole destiny and fortune, which Sir John Raymond had given. He answered quietly, however:

"I teach your sister those duties as I understand them, and as Mr. Fordyce understands them; I teach her to do as much rational good as she can in the circle round her. It is little any individual can do; but if all did their best, we should have a star-light night of it, instead of groping our way in darkness. Eleanor is at present resident at Aspendale, and wherever she happens to be resident, there the poor have a claim upon her."

"Mr. Fordyce is the clergyman of the parish, and it is his business to visit the sick and the poor; it is not Eleanor's business."

"And you think personal communion with the poor should be confined to the clergyman of the parish? Pshaw!" said David Stuart, impatiently, as he turned over the leaves of his book.

"I think," answered Godfrey, doggedly, "that Eleanor has caught the scarlet-fever in those cottages, and so you will find."

Some fever Eleanor certainly had, though the doctor said it was nervous, not infectious; and David Stuart was very near adding to his growing experiences of a child's perfections, the experience (never to be forgotten by those who have witnessed it) of the beauty, the touching

beauty, of a child's death-bed scenes—its undoubting piety—its patience under pain—its tender farewells to all friends on earth—its loving trust to meet all in heaven—its meek apologies for trouble given—its simple, fervent, eloquent prayers. Ah! who that has once seen these things can forget them, or fail to remember also the text, which affirms of children that their angels do always behold the face of the Almighty in glory?

It pleased God, in this instance, to spare the life of the child—perhaps for the after-trial of the man. While it lay ill, David Stuart watched and prayed all day and all night. For ten nights of suffering and delirium, followed by utter prostration of strength, he never left his little charge. He wrote words of comfort and encouragement to her terrified and drooping mother, which were fumigated and forwarded from one room to another by Godfrey; who, in spite of the doctor's opinion, persisted that there was a risk of infection, which he would not permit Lady Raymond to run, useless as she must be in the sick room, from her own feeble condition of health. Meanwhile, Eleanor's guardian scarcely touched food: and he was himself amazed at the anguish with which he thought of the possible death of this fragile, tender-hearted child. She did not die; she recovered; she said to him:

"I shall never hear the sound of a person writing—the sound of the pen passing over the paper, without pleasure. When I was too weak to speak, or even to open my eyes, I heard you writing; I knew there was some one in the room who loved me, and was taking care of me. Dear Guardie, when my head was confused, I thought you were my good angel, and were writing in a book all I had done to offend God, and that then you prayed it might not be reckoned against me. That was a dream; but you did pray for me very often; I saw you kneeling and praying for me. Oh, I am so glad to be spared! Pray for me now, that I may make good use of life!"

With tearful eyes, and the small, white hand folded in his own, David knelt and prayed; and the pale child whispered, "Amen."

That day he dined down stairs with the rest of the family. As he took his place at table, looking weary, and haggard, and happy, his long-watching and its successful result equally legible in his countenance, Godfrey said:

"Well, Mr. Stuart, I hope this will be a warning to you, and that you will not again take Eleanor to those sort of places; you were near costing my mother a great sorrow!"

David Stuart was mortal; not an angel, as in Eleanor's dream; and he felt irritated at this speech. He was exceedingly weary, and nothing makes men so peevish as fatigue. He did not believe Eleanor caught the fever in the cottages; and he *did* secretly believe that no one would have lamented her as much as himself. He answered, shortly, that he had already explained himself on this matter, and that what had occurred had in no way altered his opinion.

"Then give me leave to say, that my mother ought to control Eleanor. It is absurd to bring her up in this way—quite absurd!"

"Mr. Marsden," said David Stuart, "I shall teach Eleanor what I think it best for her to learn. One thing I certainly never will teach her—that she is to sit, as we sit here to-day, warm, covered, eating a good dinner by the light of wax-tapers, while, within a stone's throw of the park-gate, some poor, hungry, sickly wretch is lying, whose suffering she is not to meddle with, because the principles of political economy preach the independence of the poor."

"You teach her absurd crotchets! She never can alter the state of things. The poor are never to cease out of the land. If I had the guiding of Eleanor—"

David Stuart was fallible; and his fallibility became suddenly apparent.

"Boy," said he, passionately, to the amazed lieutenant, "I have borne much from you; and I would thank you to remember, now and henceforward, that Sir John Raymond left me guardian to his daughter, not *you*. You forget yourself!"

The pride, the passion, the sudden flash of the haughty eye, struck upon all, like an electric shock. Lady Raymond burst into tears; Emma stared, with her gentle, foolish eyes, till she looked quite stupefied.

"Forgive me," said David Stuart, "I am grieved, most grieved to have agitated Lady Raymond!" and he left the room.

"Ah!" thought he, as he slowly ascended the staircase, and opened the door of Eleanor's chamber, "is it possible that I, who an hour ago prayed with this poor child, should quarrel about her? Is it possible that, after supplicating for strength against the temptations of a whole life, I can not command even the slight, momentary temptation of anger against one of her relations? What would my poor mother have thought of this scene?"

There was much of his mother's nature in David; but the alloy of his father's blood was there also. The nerve and untiring energy, which enabled Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath for years to stem a flood of ruin, he had; but not her patient self-denial, her unswerving purpose. Her enthusiasm, her tenderness, her wide sympathy and indulgence for all her fellow-creatures, he had; but not her self-government. The pang of remorse ever followed in his heart the commission of error, but the new error was not certainly avoided. He was like a fair ship, well trimmed, with all her sails, masts, and cordage complete; her rudder and compass to steer, but no anchor to hold by when all was done.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTENDING INTERESTS.

And so it was that a mutual dislike sprang up between Godfrey Marsden and David Stuart. The latter contrasted the ungracious manner and airs of authority of the young sailor, with the tenderness, confidence, and often-repeated expressions of gratitude of Sir John Raymond; and the interference of Captain Marsden, in his guardianship of Eleanor Raymond, appeared the most unwarrantable assumption that ever was attempted. Godfrey, on the other hand, saw his mother a complete cipher in her own house, and the real master of Aspendale stand admitted in Sir John Raymond's secretary. Of Sir

John he remembered little, and that little was untinged by any great sentiment of affection.

Lieutenant Marsden had chosen his profession, it is true, and he loved it; still a boy, who is sent to sea on the occasion of his mother's second marriage, will be very apt to connect the two events in his mind as dependent on each other. He had seen little or nothing of home since that date. He had roughed out those intervening years among rough men. He had, as sailors themselves graphically express it, been "knocking about at sea" ever since. His character, naturally hard and imperious, had followed its bent. Like the heel by which Thetis held Achilles, when she dipped that hero in the Styx, there was but one soft spot in Godfrey's heart, and that was love for his mother. Even his choice of a wife had been influenced by finding his common-place Emma an attentive and favorite visitor at Aspendale, where few visitors were welcome. He took the bequest of Sir John Raymond as something done to please his mother, whom too much could not be done to please. He felt no particular gratitude; he did not see that the occasion called for any. The affliction of the feeble widow was grief to him; the death of his step-father was none.

Godfrey had a painful instinct that Lady Raymond had never loved his own father, as she had loved Sir John Raymond; and now there was no one she loved as fervently as Godfrey; for he was conscious that the affection bestowed on his little half-sister would bear no comparison, with that she bestowed on himself. Lady Raymond was passively tender and gentle to Eleanor, because it was her nature to be passively tender and gentle to all things; but she loved her less than the memory of the little boy who was buried in an Indian grave; less, far less, than the stern son of the yet sterner husband of her youth. There are women who are incapable of loving their daughters, as well as their sons, just as there are men who can not love their sons as they do their daughters. Let metaphysicians account for it: the fact is so. Something there may be in that leaning to contrasts, so salient in the human heart. The feeble, fragile woman was proud of being Godfrey's mother; there was nothing to be proud of in being the mother of Eleanor. Whatever aversion might, however, exist between her son and the man to whom her late husband had confided their daughter, Lady Raymond was troubled with no further evidence of it. Godfrey comprehended (after much weeping, and the expression of hypochondriacal terrors, on his mother's part, which sounded to the young sailor very like the explanation of a child who is afraid to be left alone in the dark), that it suited Lady Raymond that Eleanor's guardian should remain at Aspendale; and, as she expressed it, "take all the dreadful responsibility off her hands." He, therefore, gloomily acquiesced in what appeared to him a most preposterous arrangement; and showed what disposition he could, to keep on friendly terms with Mr. Stuart.

He left to David (who was cast in a gentler mould, and whose heart smote him sorely for the tears he had wrung by a rash sentence from s benefactor's widow) the task of that daily *d petty self-command*, which is more irksome to our wayward nature than great occasional sacrifices. David watched himself; he endeavored to like Godfrey; and Godfrey condescended to bear with him.

Lieutenant Marsden's stay on the present occasion did not greatly exceed a year; and, if truth must be told, he became a little restless and anxious to be afloat, even before he was appointed to another ship. Habit is second nature; and his second nature was to be tossed about by winds and waves, passing with more or less speed over the blank waste of the mighty ocean; or along dimly-seen coasts, whose pale lilac outline by day, and star-like light-houses by night, give such guidance to an otherwise trackless course, as was given of old by the pillar of cloud and fire in Scripture; and in a manner which seems almost as miraculous to the uninitiated. He left to his common-place Emma the holy and innocent occupation of a mother's care of their infant son; which she proceeded to fulfill, calmly, kindly, and faithfully, as she did all the other duties of her tranquil life.

She loved her stern husband, and wept at the thoughts of parting from him. When reproved, however, by Godfrey, for her tears, which he affirmed were not only childish, but an offense to God and to himself, she dried them; and only the baby, on whose face the drops fell, as she turned from the park-gate, after seeing Godfrey start by the mail for Portsmouth, was conscious of her renewed temporary disobedience.

It was a relief to David Stuart when Godfrey Marsden went; and so it was to Eleanor; though her half-brother had tormented her less of late, partly mollified by her submission, and partly occupied with his wife's situation, and his own prospects of employment. Closer and closer the bond was knit that bound the guardian and ward together. Hard study, and lighter accomplishments, walks, rides, and the cavilled-at visitings in the cottages of the poor, filled up the happy days.

It was pleasant to Eleanor to sit and listen to David Stuart reading the Scriptures to the aged and dying; pleasant to hear his kind, patient answers, his simple, eloquent explanations, his method of informing and entertaining a class of sufferers, who, with few friends and no books, lie through the long days of sickness, listlessly gazing at a blank cottage-wall. It was pleasant to her to ride over the craggy heath, and along shadowy summer lanes, mounted on the beautiful pony he had chosen for her. Pleasant to wander on the lovely evenings that closed a sultry day, down to the Roaring Linn, and sit there among the fern and moss-covered rocks. Pleasant to cultivate flowers raised from Indian seeds, and watch their strange tropic splendors come out along the greenhouse walls. Pleasant the music on winter evenings; the sketches made while favorite books were read aloud.

And all this went quietly on, till Eleanor was fifteen, and she had had no governess!

In his heart, David Stuart was not a little vain of the result of his apprenticeship in education. Eleanor was as sensible and well-informed as it was possible for a girl to be: a more charming companion no man could have desired to find in a wife: one more pure-hearted and amiable no man would have wished to call daughter. Lady Raymond was pleased and grateful; she had

become gradually more cheerful; and the little family circle was as comfortable as a family circle could be.

It was about this time that the announcement of an obscure death in the papers woke throbbing echoes in David Stuart's heart; and in Eleanor's for his sake. It was the death of Mr. Peter Christison, writer, of Edinburgh. He had been the last surviving trustee in a Scotch trust, involving the principal portion of the property of the late Mr. Stuart of Dunleath. A Scotch trust is proverbially ruinous to those who are dependent upon it. Scotch writers and trustees occasionally make large and rapid fortunes. I should be loth to draw any inference which might, in this particular instance, seem to imply a connection between these two facts; but it is certain that, while the fortunes intrusted to Mr. Christison's management gradually diminished, his own gradually increased. Indeed, the augmentation, on the one side, bore so exact a proportion to the diminution on the other, that a simple person might be excused for imagining he, perhaps, enriched himself at the expense of those whose interests he was bound to protect.

The beautiful, unhappy Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath once remarked to him, while wearying through accounts which her husband would never examine: "Mr. Christison, there must be either great carelessness or absolute cheating somewhere!"

"Eh! Mistress Stuart! there may be carelessness, ma'am; but ye'll no suppose—"

"Carelessness is cheating on the part of a man of business," observed the lady; and the observation never was forgotten, or forgiven.

How the money went, no one exactly knew. Mr. Stuart kept open house, and did not keep any accounts. He was fond of traveling, fond of pictures, statues, Scagliola marbles, every thing of which the purchase is enormous, and the transport doubles the purchase-money. And he bought, and transported to Dunleath, whatever he had a mind to. Never was Stuart of Dunleath known to deny himself a wish, or to reason upon its prudence. He planned beautiful new green-houses when he could scarcely command money enough to pay his gardener's wages; and he placed antique statues, draped and undraped, at intervals, along his lawn, long after he had ceased to meet his tailor's bills. Why he could not pay his gardener, or his tailor, was attempted to be shown (or concealed) in very lengthy and complex accounts; but to the last Mr. Stuart could never be brought to look these over.

"We're ruined, my dear, and that's enough," said he, moodily; "and we'll go and live at Palermo. Palermo's just a beautiful place."

I can not expect my readers to have more patience about the exact position of Mr. Stuart's affairs than he had himself. But the brief result of the complex accounts was, that the owner sold Dunleath, and the writer bought it.

It is the brief result of many Scotch trust accounts.

Mr. Stuart died, and left nothing to his son. Mr. Peter Christison died, and left Dunleath to his widow; and now Mrs. Peter wanted to sell Dunleath, for she thought it would be less "lonesome" to live in Edinburgh than in that paradise of David Stuart's childhood. Fain, fain would David have gratified the widow, by taking it off her hands; but he had not a sixpence in the world beyond Sir John Raymond's bequest, and three times that amount would not have bought Dunleath.

"I declare," said he to Eleanor, "I could be satisfied to die the week after, only to tread the heather once more, calling the land my own. Home is home any where; but rely upon it, there is something in the freedom, wildness, and beauty of a mountainous country, which nurses the love of home into a passion. It is so with the Swiss: remember the fact told in the movements of the allied armies, that the mountain airs peculiar to Switzerland were forbidden to be played to the troops, on the plea that they woke so wild a regret in the men's hearts, that they caused fever, desertions, and deaths. So also, at one time, the playing of the air 'Farewell to Lochaber' was forbidden among the Highland regiments in America. I understand this. I can not describe to you the sensations with which I have sometimes thought of Dunleath. In India especially, in that oppressive climate, under that sultry sun, I have sometimes thought of the lake, the fir-trees, and the blue hills beyond, till my yearning amounted to madness!"

"But you may regain Dunleath," said Eleanor, gently. "Remember Lord Clive; remember how many instances there are of that sort; we never know what the chances of life may bring."

And in her heart Eleanor wondered (since she certainly was an heiress) whether she could not buy Dunleath and bestow it on her guardian. She had a very vague notion of what the cost of such a magnificent gift would be, but she knew she had a very large fortune. With an innocent fear lest he should guess her thought, she forbore from asking either of the leading questions which might have resolved these doubts. Only she dreamed more than ever of the place she had never seen, and she copied every sketch and fragment David Stuart had preserved of the scenery there: the sun-dial that had been a Greek altar, with the blue lake and mountains beyond—clumps of old firs with bronzed stems and stern crooked branches cutting the clear sky—great gray stones and moss-covered rocks, round which the stream went gurgling and foaming down the glen—patches of glorious color where the scarlet rowan and silver larch, and trees of all autumnal shades bent over the white spray of the waterfall—still black tarns, that lay among the mountains without a shore, edged only by the soft peat, and heather with its scanty herbage—wild glens—long outlines of purple hills with clouds and mists lying over their summits and along their sides—all these did Eleanor's skillful pencil reproduce. And the most successful of them she framed and hung up; so that any one coming into Miss Raymond's dressing-room, would have imagined her whole life had been passed in the Highlands.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELEANOR'S GUARDIAN ABSENTS HIMSELF.

WHETHER it was from brooding over the chances consequent on Mr. Peter Christison'

death, or other causes, David Stuart became sad and restless. He was absent on business much more frequently than formerly, and for much longer periods. At last one day he bid Eleanor good-by, with the unwelcome intimation that he should be away for a month.

'You are beginning to be a very truant guardian," said she, half sadly, half playfully. "I shall go back in all my schooling."

David looked at her and sighed.

"It is to wean you, my little Eleanor; you know when you are one-and-twenty, or sooner, if you marry with my consent, my guardianship ceases. We can not always be together; I wish we could."

These words made a terrible impression upon Eleanor. They pursued her with a melancholy echo:

"We can not always be together."

She wept when her guardian was gone, and went to take a solitary musing walk down the lime avenue, haunted by disturbed fancies half sweet, and half bitter. The days when she was a little child came back to her; she saw her former self wandering alone in the sunny garden, chasing the butterflies, and listening to the clear song of the birds above her head, yearning for some little companion to play with and talk to. Then the first pleasant walks with her guardian recurred to memory. The gentle kindness of his explanations; his smile of amused delight at her answers; his curiosity to know what she thought and understood. The expression of his countenance at other times, intently reading; undisturbed by, and unconscious of her approach, or noticing it as little as the fluttering of a bird's wing, or the dancing of a bough in the breeze. Then his image would suddenly present itself, waiting for her at the opening of the lime avenue; tired of studious contemplation; calling her to come back, and rove through the forest glade to the rocks by the roaring Linn. His tall slight figure seemed to stand under the arch of those meeting branches, the half-closed book in his hands, his brows knit that his dazzled eyes might distinguish among the flowers and sunshine, the white frock and blue sash of his little ward. Then the pleasant wanderings in more recent days; the sound of the doves murmuring in the wood; the springing away of the startled deer in the open park in their long evening rides, when David Stuart would describe Dunleath, or speak of his father, with a voice that sometimes faltered in its tone.

Oh, how full of embarrassment had Eleanor felt at such times; riding silently on, in the deepening twilight by his side, and stealing shy glances at his severely beautiful profile, drawn as it seemed against the evening sky; till he would turn and smile kindly at her, and talk of other things. Noble deeds and hair-breadth escapes, foreign lands, wild superstitions, books of imagination and of real history: what was there they had not talked of, that was within her comprehension?

"Ah! happy life!" thought Eleanor Raymond, as she pursued her now lonely walk; and with the conviction of its happiness came a vague and uncertain dread for the future. Her guardian was gone; he alluded to future absences; and not only to these, but he had spoken, *a fixed* and unalterable certainty, of the time when his presence at Aspendale would no longer be necessary.

The day was to come, then, when they were to part—they who had lived so long in close companionship! He was not a father, or a brother, whose society she was certain to enjoy at intervals as long as life endured; he was only her guardian; when she should attain the age of twenty-one (or sooner, if she married with his consent), her guardian's power ceased. Eleanor inwardly vowed never to marry; and she counted the years that intervened between fifteen and twenty-one. Six years; it was a long time to look forward to. But then, had she not already passed five in his society, and they seemed but as a day? Eleanor grew sad as she thought of the speed with which those other six years might pass; for then, what a blank—what a dreary void—what a life in vain—would life be without her guardian! She almost wished she might die before she was twenty-one, or just afterward; on her one-and-twentieth birthday, perhaps, and how sorry David Stuart would be! The tears positively rushed into Eleanor's eyes, as she imaged the grief her guardian would experience at her death. And then she wondered whether, after she was laid in the grave, he would miss her much—whether he would miss her always, as she missed him; reading, walking, riding, and thinking.

And then came a doubt into Eleanor's mind, whether such a gentle and considerate sorrow as she trusted her kind guardian would feel for her, would not be comforted in time: and then another thought, who would comfort him? and who would fill her place? And Eleanor felt less resigned to die, and more anxious than ever she had been before to know who were David Stuart's friends, and what his amusements and occupations when away from Aspendale.

These contemplations occupied Eleanor greatly. They were continual, but she did not find them monotonous; they were foolish, but she was not conscious of their folly.

One morning, when instead of eating her breakfast, she was calculating the exact day of David's return, the old butler broke in upon her meditations, by presenting her with a letter. To Eleanor, who knew scarcely any one, and had never been from home, a letter was an event; and she took it with a slight blush of expectation and curiosity. It was from her guardian, the first she had received from him—

London, June 13th.

"My dear Eleanor—I find my absence will be prolonged beyond what I expected. I am going to Scotland—to Edinburgh—to transact some tedious business; it is therefore my wish that you should write to me from time to time, that I may know how you are going on. You can continue your German translations; I will look them over when we meet. You can also practice your drawing; taking more pains with the rules of perspective, and trusting less to the accuracy of your eye. Let Gibbon rest till I continue it with you; careless reading will not profit you; and I fear it requires all your awe of my authority to fix your attention on that great work. I will answer all your letters punctually, however busy I may be.

Remember me to Lady Raymond, whose health is, I trust, as usual. God bless you.

"D. STUART."

Analaschar, when he shivered his stock in trade, while dreaming of future prosperity, could not have felt a more sudden revulsion of bitterness than Eleanor Raymond, as she concluded this brief and unwelcome epistle. It had been received at a moment when her fancy and tenderness were wrought to the highest pitch. She felt jarred and offended. She had just been hoping for the day of his return, and he informed her of his indefinitely-prolonged absence, without one line of regret or one expression which might be construed into a wish that he were at Aspendale instead of Edinburgh! She felt as if some dear friend had suddenly refused her in the harshest terms a favor she had counted upon; and after struggling for a moment she burst into tears.

Time, however, which has no respect either for joy or sorrow, but rolls on with silent and unfelt speed, slacked not his pace for David Stuart's absence. Eleanor found the usual hours easily occupied by her usual studies, and amusements; and the privilege of corresponding with her guardian, a novel and delightful pleasure. She treasured up his letters in a sandal-wood box, and she read them over every day. They had become quite a little series before David returned; and in the interim Godfrey Marsden's arrival gladdened his mother and wife. Of his half-sister he took little notice, and he was of opinion that his baby should be corrected for crying when it was brought to greet him, whether it recognized him or not. Eleanor was sitting with Emma, Godfrey, and her mother, at the open folding-doors of the terrace-window, when another arrival took place. She started up, and running down the steps, embraced her guardian with eager gladness. As he kissed her cheek, he said:

"Eleanor, I have brought you a Highland grayhound."

Who is there, who has not, while listening to the most insignificant sentence, felt that suffering of which we know not the cause, emotion of which we can not sound the depth, deserved or undeserved displeasure, or boundless and unconfessed affection, have so altered the speaker's voice, that we can neither forget nor overcome the impression? Such was the strange feeling with which Eleanor listened to the first words spoken by her guardian. The words were nothing; they were kind, they were simple; but the tone! What sorrow—what bitterness—was in the tone of his voice! It was only for a moment; as if conscious of it, he said, gently:

"The dog is a little large and rough for a lady's pet; but he is a good and noble creature, and will make an excellent companion in your walks and rides."

"He shall be my guardian, always, when you are away; and defend and protect me from all dangers."

As she spoke, she turned her face with a smile to the giver; he was pale; his eyes were fixed on her, but as if he did not hear nor attend to what she was saying.

"You are ill! Surely you are ill, Guardy," said Eleanor timidly. David Stuart started and sighed:

"I am only fatigued," said he; "I have been traveling these two nights past."

He turned from her, and entered the room where Lady Raymond and her son were sitting; she greeted him in her usual languid manner; Godfrey with tolerable cordiality; and he passed on toward the library. Eleanor followed him for a few steps, but he did not seem aware of her presence, and left her with her eyes riveted on the door which he closed after him.

She returned, with a bewildered air, to the sitting-room. Godfrey was discussing something eagerly, almost angrily.

"Well, speak to her now," were the words Eleanor caught as she came forward.

"Eleanor dear, Godfrey thinks, and so do I, that you are rather childish for your age."

"Does he, dear mamma?" said the gentle girl, with a smile. Tell me in what, and you shall see how womanly I shall grow?" and she seated herself by Lady Raymond, and kissed the hand that rested on the arm of her chair.

"My mother and I consider," said Godfrey, sternly, "that your manner is too childish with Mr. Stuart; flying down the steps in that heedless way to meet him; and kissing him. You are past fifteen, far too old for those romping and forward methods of displaying fondness: it really is most improper." (Here Lady Raymond looked uneasily from her son to her daughter.) "She ought to be told of it, mother," said Godfrey doggedly. "You ought also to leave off that ridiculous habit of calling him 'Guardy,' like a miss in an old comedy: and recollect that there is a difference of situation—of position—between Mr. Stuart and your father's daughter."

"You know, dear," gently interposed her mother, "your birth and fortune will enable you to mingle in the best society. You will soon be old enough to be presented; and we wish you would reflect—that is, that you could understand—I am sure I would not say," (Lady Raymond was getting very nervous), "a word against Mr. Stuart; we all owe him much; I should be sorry you could feel otherwise than gratefully and kindly to him—"

"Of course, my dear mother, she knows that; but she ought to remember that Mr. Stuart was only Sir John Raymond's secretary and man of business," said Godfrey, with an imperious air.

Eleanor did not reply: from under the long dark lashes which quivered over her flushing cheek, she glanced toward the Indian cabinet where lay her father's last letter—that solemn and touching appeal which had been their only introduction to her guardian. Her guardian! of whom Godfrey spoke as if he were a hired clerk; and who, after all, was the son of Mr. Stuart of Dunleath. His ruin could not blot out hereditary descent. It was as good blood as any in Scotland. And his poverty! was Godfrey himself so wealthy, or so nobly born? He, who also inherited an independence from the generosity of her father! The first proud glance shot from Eleanor's eyes at her half-brother; then she repeated mentally those last affecting words, so often perused, so often blotted with her own and her poor mother's weeping:

"Teach my child to respect and look up to him! and never forget that to his ear was whispered the blessing I pined to bestow on my distant wife and little one; that his hand was the last that pressed the hand of the exile, whom it was God's will should die in sight of shore."

Tears stole into Eleanor Raymond's eyes.

"Don't be vexed, darling," said her mother.

"Don't be peevish, would be a better phrase, I think," said Godfrey, scornfully. "If Eleanor can't bear a word of reproof from those who have the best right to offer it—"

"I will remember all you wish, mamma: do not think I am peevish," said Eleanor. She bent, and kissed her mother's cheek, and glided from the room.

Lady Raymond, after giving a glance of maternal satisfaction at her graceful figure, leaned back with half-closed eyes, quite fatigued with the unusual effort she had made.

"You see how gentle she is, poor child,' said she to Godfrey, after a pause. "She will certainly attend to what we have said. She is so docile and sweet tempered, and so ready to take any little hint."

"Well, I hope she may;" was Godfrey's reply, "her manners are as bad as possible. She is always on this low-cushioned stool, or sitting on the grass, or kneeling, while you are talking to her. All that is very bad, very undignified and unladylike. Yesterday she dropped her fork and leaned her cheek on her hand in the middle of dinner, with some wild exclamation about the sunset. I think she is growing very affected."

"I shall make *her* do the honors for the future, my dear Godfrey; and I will gradually begin to see a few of the country neighbors, if I can possibly arouse myself to call. That will improve Eleanor: it will form her; and all you object to, will alter of itself. I am so glad you are here to say what should be done."

CHAPTER IX.

The embarrassment which Godfrey's observations had created in Eleanor's mind, appeared to have communicated itself to her guardian. She was shy, and he seemed both shy and sad. The pains she had taken to improve the time of his absence by attention to her studies, seemed quite thrown away; he listened in a dejected indifferent manner to her Italian reading; he made no comment, he offered no corrections. If she came into the library, instead of finding him tranquilly engaged with some favorite author, perhaps smiling to himself over its pages; he met her with a start, walking restlessly up and down the room with folded arms, or she saw him leaning in the embrasure of the windows, looking out on the lawn, wistful and unoccupied. Was it possible that he was offended with her—angry at the change which she was conscious had stolen into her manner toward him? He could not know Godfrey's criticism. Could he think her so ungrateful as to be altered by his absence from home; or was he grieving [illegible] cause unknown to Eleanor? Her [illegible]ts reverted to Mr. Peter Christison's and Dunleath.

"Did you see any old friends at Edinburgh?" she asked.

"No, Eleanor, I have no old friends. You know, my life since boyhood has been spent abroad. Few of my father's friends would recollect me, and people are not over eager in claiming acquaintance with the sons of ruined men. I saw one old friend in London, and I talked to her of you."

To *her*: a lady friend!

Eleanor was considering how to shape some question which might give her a notion what sort of friend; young or old, pretty or plain; when a deep sigh from her guardian startled her, and looking up in his face, the expression of pain and dejection written there forbade further comment. They took a cheerless, silent walk to the old haunts, through the park gates, and the forest glade, down to the roaring Linn. The day was oppressively hot, and the cool mossy shade round the Linn, with all its fern-covered rocks, and tangled foliage, seemed to Eleanor delicious.

"How pleasant and peaceful every thing is here," said she, looking upward with serene eyes to the blue sky, seen through the lattice-work of light branches over her head.

But David Stuart only muttered in reply the text, "And they cry peace, peace, when there is no peace."

There was a long pause. Eleanor was watching the dragon flies dart across the gleams of sunshine in the black pool below; her guardian also looked down into the pool, with dreaming eyes that saw nothing.

"When I have my own fortune," said she, "will it be an income paid to me every year, or shall I be able to employ large sums in any way I please?"

The start, the look of wild astonishment, on the part of her guardian, did not discourage Eleanor, whose head was full of her project of buying Dunleath. She smiled as with a sort of playful obstinacy she repeated, "I say, may I do as I please with it?"

The amazement faded out of David Stuart's countenance: he forced a smile, and said:

"What do you want to do with it? build an Italian palace, or a Gothic church, on plans of your own drawing?"

A small thing will change conversation; this allusion to Eleanor's love of architectural drawing, and decorative art, a taste which her guardian fully shared, turned the current of moody thought into a new channel, she answered gayly:

"I believe I could persuade you to let me do that, without waiting till I am of age. We would spend it all in marble columns, and superb sculpture, and we would build a wonder of the world."

"For the present you must content yourself with building castles in the air, my dear Eleanor," said he, with a smile; and then, rallying out of his dejection, he pursued the favorite theme, and once more talked to Eleanor, as she loved to hear him. He described the Town-hall at Bruges, and told her the story of Jacques Cœur, the Flemish jeweler, whose house it was, and whose history is a pendant to our Wolsey's, in its illustration of the text, "Put not your trust in princes."

He described the curious church of San

Miniato, at Florence, which Michael Angelo defended as a soldier, and where a thin slab of marble, at the eastern end of the church, admits a clouded glory of light at sunrise, remaining a blank wall during the rest of the day. He spoke of Italian and German churches, Indian temples, Turkish mosques, and Druid circles; of England and her ancient cathedrals; of the vulgar desecration of St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey (where certainly the last thing any one is allowed to do, is "to meditate among the tombs"). Of the prejudice against pictorial decoration, and the outcry raised on that subject, though there is scarcely a whitewashed village church that has not a representation of the symbolical dove painted over its altar. Of the iconoclastic fancy, that it must be more acceptable to God to pray to him in a church, left blank as the manger where the Saviour was first cradled, than to worship in temples of architectural beauty: and to raise singing of such a sort in His service, that only a strong sense of the reverence due to holy places can prevent us from shutting out the discord, by stopping our ears. Then they spoke of the old Covenanters; of the Waldenses; of noble struggles, and many martyrdoms; and then of Melrose Abbey and Walter Scott; but as they talked of Scotland, and the architectural relics there, David Stuart's sadness returned, and at length he relapsed into silence. Eleanor broke that silence by a desperate and straightforward question.

"What would Dunleath cost?" said she.

David Stuart turned and looked at her, repeating the words in a strange, irritable, gloomy tone.

"Mrs. Christison has changed her mind about Dunleath, I believe; it suits her daughter that they should remain there. It is not for sale." Then he added vehemently and passionately: "I do not know how it is, Eleanor, that you seem bent on torturing me to-day!"

The gentle girl looked up in his face, with unconstrained amazement. Her guardian had never been unjust to her before. Her mother was always tender; no one had ever been harsh to her but Godfrey. She felt wounded.

"My thoughts were very far from giving you offense," said she reproachfully.

David took her hand, and kissed it gently and sadly.

"I am ill, body and mind," said he. "I suffer; bear with me, even if I do not deserve it!"

Easy was it to Eleanor to bear with him. She would have endured any pain for his sake, if pain could be delegated; but it was not easy to her to free her mind from a certain depression and conscious strangeness. She did not know which was most grievous to her, the voice in which he had accused her of "torturing" him, or the tone of miserable supplication in which he pleaded with her for patience. It was surely a reversal of their mutual position! He was her guardian, her protector, her father's friend, set in authority over her by that father. There was something shocking to Eleanor in his beseeching her to bear with him. But she answered him with the old innocent look of compassion he had so often seen in her eyes when a child, while listening to stories of his mother, and his lost brothers and sister. In those days the compassion of the little child had fallen upon him like balm—but to-day it seemed to fester in his heart!

CHAPTER X.

Lady Raymond did, as she had promised Godfrey, "rouse herself to call upon some of the country neighbors." Visits were paid, invitations were exchanged. People were very willing to come and see the pretty little heiress, and the widow who had lived as they said so long in grief and seclusion, watching over the education of her child. And then Godfrey discovered another fault in Eleanor; whom he pronounced to be extremely awkward. She was also painfully shy and silent with strangers, which he affirmed to be perfectly ridiculous, as she could converse at home with extreme ease and fluency upon all subjects, and even showed a remarkable and superior intelligence.

It was the more irritating, as the little she did manage to say or do, was said and done with so constant a reference to her guardian, that Mr. Stuart on more than one occasion, without any assumption on his part, seemed to be doing the honors of Lady Raymond's house. The female part of the community also paid David a degree of attention extremely provoking to Godfrey. Those who had sons to marry, naturally thought it would be as well to be on good terms with the guardian whose consent would be required; and those who had not, finding themselves guests in a household composed of a languid invalided woman, a shy girl, a brusque sailor and his wife, and a very agreeable and handsome young man, quietly threw over the other elements of companionship presented to them, and addicted themselves to the last. While the company staid, they made much of David; when the company were gone, Eleanor chatted merrily with him, as if to make amends for the constraint she had endured. Godfrey made a new move.

"I presume," said he, one morning at breakfast, "that although Mr. Stuart has been Nell's tutor, he does not intend to be her chaperon. Your health, my dear mother, puts it out of the question that you should fag yourself at balls and parties, and my Emma is not fit for that sort of thing. I have been thinking that Lady Margaret Fordyce, who is my wife's aunt by marriage, might undertake it."

"Lady Margaret has already undertaken it, subject to Lady Raymond's approval;" said David, with a slight tinge of mockery in his smile. "She is a very old friend of mine; I have known her since I was a boy. I saw her when I was in London, and we talked over this matter. For once, Mr. Marsden, you and I perfectly coincide in our views of what should be done. Lady Margaret is highly connected, valued and respected in society, and would probably find interest and amusement in the task."

Lady Margaret was accordingly invited to Aspendale. She wrote word that having been away many years in Italy, she had promised to make a whole tour of visits in Scotland, that

autumn and winter; but she would come for a month in the spring.

The autumn and winter wore away; no event of importance occurred. Lady Raymond caught an inflammatory cold driving home from a dinner given by one of the country neighbors, and David Stuart grew daily more moody, restless, and unhappy, as it seemed to Eleanor. They were, therefore, all more or less *triste* when the momentous day arrived which brought the proposed chaperon.

When Lady Margaret Fordyce was announced, and entered the drawing-room, leading her little daughter by the hand, Eleanor could not restrain an exclamation of astonishment. If a rose had by some sudden transformation been turned into a lady, and its bud into her child, she could not have felt more amazed. "Good heavens, how beautiful!" she said, turning to her guardian; but he was looking with a glad smile at the new comers.

Lady Margaret came forward rapidly and gracefully. She greeted the Marsdens, was introduced to Lady Raymond, and then letting go her child's hand and taking Eleanor's, she said smiling:

"And this is my eldest daughter, that is to be."

The lovely stranger was a woman of the world; she made no exclamation about Eleanor's beauty; but it was clear that she also was surprised and struck. Eleanor's heart beat quick; confused thoughts chased each other through her mind. It was strange in all their conversations, it had never occurred to David Stuart to tell her how very beautiful his old friend was; and somehow she had clothed the idea of a chaperon, in a more elderly form.

Her chaperon, and Godfrey Marsden's aunt by marriage! Was it possible she beheld the incarnation of these two thoughts?

Lady Margaret was a very great beauty. There could be no dispute about that. Her enemies—no, she had no enemies, but such critics as were not friends—said her figure was too full, and her eyebrows and eyelashes not dark enough; but a certain air of candor, intelligence, and power, gave great dignity to her face, and she carried herself with grace and majesty. Her complexion was sunny and rich; her hands and arms those of a statue; and her faultless mouth so alive with expression, that you could have told her mood before speaking, as the deaf guess the words they do not hear. When she had interchanged greeting with all the assembled guests, she turned again to David Stuart.

"Here is a packet from your lawyer," said she. "He brought it to me before I left town. I have held it in my hand the whole way; for if there is any thing inspires me with awe, it is a packet tied with pink tape from a lawyer's office. Now I will go and take off my bonnet, and become one of the family." She smiled at Eleanor as she said the last words, and they went together from the room.

Before they returned, David had read his lawyer's packet, long as it was; and Eleanor had ascertained, that Lady Margaret being sister to the Duke of Lanark, and Lanark's Lodge the nearest place to Dunleath, she had known Miss Raymond's guardian in very early days; and Mr. Fordyce having been much in Italy, she had also met Mr. Stuart in later days.

"They were very good friends," Lady Margaret said; and Eleanor sighed. Either Lady Margaret's arrival or the lawyer's packet must have gladdened David Stuart amazingly, for Eleanor had scarcely ever seen him in such spirits; she never remembered such a merry dinner as they had that evening; she never had seen any one so lovely or so entertaining as Lady Margaret. What a quantity of persons, things, and places, she and David seemed to have known and seen together, and how pleasantly she talked of all! What stores of information, what ready, graceful wit, what kindliness and earnestness, came out like sunny sparkles on the stream of her discourse! Eleanor felt dazzled and bewildered; it was like a dream. But when, after dinner, David hoped she was not too tired with her journey to sing, and Lady Margaret sang; then Eleanor's admiration reached its height.

The gush of that sweet, clear, powerful voice, thrilled to her heart. Songs were sung, "old as the hills," but new to Eleanor. Scotch ballads, with their sudden octaves of distance and touching words; merry Neapolitan airs, mingled with recitative; melancholy and passionate German melodies of the divine Schubert; French romances; nothing seemed to come amiss to Lady Margaret. She wound up with a little plaintive Hindoo air, reminding David of the day he taught it to her, and how they both laughed at their own vexation at the quantity of tedious visitors who poured in that particular morning, as if purposely to prevent the completion of the lesson. Then she told David not to be lazy, but to come and sing himself; and they sang together.

Was Eleanor jealous of the accomplishments of her new friend? Surely not. All the ladies in Christendom might have sung like skylarks, and she would only have been glad of it for their sakes; and yet she felt pained. Here was a stranger come among them, who knew her guardian so very intimately—who remembered Dunleath and his mother—who could sing with him. Eleanor could not sing. Her guardian had taught her music, and she had learnt it well and quickly; but he was not a god—he could not give her a voice. What a loss it seemed as she sat now and listened. Those blended tones; those long, soft, thrilling notes, that rose like angel messengers, floating away to an unknown world; that companionship of life and breath, vague and delicious, why had heaven denied it to her?

It was not till even Lady Margaret's beautiful voice gave evidence of fatigue, that David turned from the piano, and came back to his place. She followed him, and sat down by Eleanor.

"Now that I am fairly installed in office," said she, gayly, "I shall begin, like all new officials, to make great reforms—wonderful reforms; and, first of all, in Eleanor's dress."

"Is she ill-dressed? It seems to me a very pretty gown," said David, looking fondly at Eleanor.

"It is a color for an old dowager, not a young girl; and only look at the sleeves!"

"Oh, I know nothing about sleeves," said he, laughing.

"But I do, and it shocks me to see such a

sleeve. Discords in dress strike my eye, as discords in music strike your ear. I can't bear them: my spirits fail and I become quite irritable in the company of dowdies, while I am polite and charming in a well-dressed circle. People talk of vanity and frivolity; but, depend upon it, there is a harmony in dress, as there is in all other arts and sciences, and we ought to understand it. It does not take more time or more money to be prettily dressed, than to be dressed in unsuitable colors. Eleanor must not be a dowdy. I approve of a prospectus I read in some annual, for the establishment of a Beauti-cultural Society, where prizes are to be given to those who are the best-looking, and fines levied on those who choose to make unbecoming toilets. It will be a most useful institution."

"Well, Eleanor shall be a member. I will cede my authority to you, so far."

"Then her dressing-room—I thought I was in some young bachelor's chambers in the Temple. No muslin, no screens, no knick-knacks of any kind; a regular library in miniature; book-cases down each side of the fire-place, with all sorts of learned books in them; a reading-table, a writing-table, and a painting-table: as to the dressing-table, I really expected to find upon it razors, and diamond-dust for sharpening them. I was comforted only by the extreme and feminine feebleness of the sketches of lovely Dunleath, which I suppose you have set her as copies. You must have a good master, dear Eleanor," said she, turning kindly to her: "you have great talent for drawing, though I discourage this guardian of yours, and want to set all the wheels going, on a new principle. By-the-by, Mr. Stuart, I have brought down some H. B.'s! they are very good."

She rose and fetched the caricatures, and laid them one by one before him; standing by, and looking at them over his shoulder. Eleanor knew nothing of politics or political men. She had heard fragments of what appeared to her intolerably dull conversation between the neighboring country-gentlemen, about Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel, and people who were "in," or "out," like boys at cricket, but she gave no heed to it. Now she was sorry she could not understand the jests which seemed to amuse her guardian. She sate, looking gravely, almost sadly, at these two friends, who were not thinking of her or of any thing she could share in. A little circumstance startled her out of her reverie. Lady Margaret suddenly laughed, as she bent to look at one of the H. B.'s sketches. Mr. David Stuart, among other personal advantages, had beautiful hair; and his hair curled, almost in ringlets, at each temple. When Lady Margaret laughed, her head was bent so low that her breath stirred the ringlet like a waft of the summer breeze. A hot, angry thrill went through Eleanor's heart. For days afterward, with a vividness that astonished her, she was haunted by the image of those two heads bowed together over the caricatures, and the waving of that curl in the breath of Lady Margaret's joyous laugh. While the H. B.'s were being restored to their portfolio, David Stuart turned to Eleanor.

"You look pale and bored, my little girl," said he, "come and play a game of chess."

His manner was so gay, she could not resist remarking it to him.

"You are quite light-hearted again," said she.

"Yes, I have had such good news; when you know Lady Margaret better—" (and he looked back at her with a kind smile) "you will know that she carries sunshine with her wherever she comes."

The game of chess was played, but Eleanor was sadly inattentive. She glanced at Lady Margaret, who was teaching little Euphemia the crotchet-stitch; and then, with her eyes fixed on the chess-board, she allowed her thoughts to roam vaguely through real and imaginary scenes, all more or less connected with the fact of the great intimacy that subsisted between her guardian and her chaperon that was to be. Oh! how well she seemed to know his tastes, his habits of thought. How far, far beyond poor Eleanor's, was her power of entertaining him. How wonderfully beautiful she was! How glad he seemed since her arrival; he that had been so sad and absent in spirit for months. How kind, cordial, almost caressing was her manner to him! These, and such-like thoughts, turned round like a water-wheel in Eleanor's mind. Presently, little Euphemia came up to the chess-table.

"Good night, I am going to bed," said she. "Good night, Mr. Stuart," and she put her little face up to be kissed. "Good night, Miss Raymond."

Eleanor hesitated. Unaccountably the scene returned to her, when Godfrey had commented on her freedom of manner with her guardian; when he had advised her to be more dignified; when he had said that embracing Mr. Stuart was a forward method of displaying her affection. Some nervous oppression hung on her spirits. She gazed at Euphemia, and sighed. The shadow of David's kiss seemed to hover round the child's mouth, as the shadows of clouds fleet over the corn on a sunny day. The color rose in her cheek.

"If you won't kiss me, I shall make you a courtesy," said the little girl, and ran merrily away.

"You were not much older than that, dear Eleanor, when first I came to Aspendale," said David Stuart; and in his tone, and in his eyes, there was such a deep and cherishing tenderness, such gathering up of memories for long years, such blending of her helpless childhood, with present days, that Eleanor suddenly felt happier than she had believed it possible, during the last two hours, ever to feel again.

CHAPTER XI.

Day by day the same nothings that seemed so much, the grains of sand along the pathway of life, disturbed Eleanor Raymond's mind. Lady Margaret was kindness itself, not only to Eleanor, but to all around her. She contrived to converse even with Godfrey's common-place Emma. She nursed Emma's new baby; an obstinate-looking and not well-tempered baby, exceedingly like its father; and soothed it in its most irate moments with a spell such as the famous whisperer exercised on vicious horses. She amused Lady

Raymond, and accompanied her in the little dowager drives, which had hitherto been solitary. She was almost an idol at the Parsonage-house with old Mr. Fordyce. I think she would have succeeded even in mollifying Godfrey, if she had not so pertinaciously defended David Stuart from all his criticisms, and shown so open a regard for him. She was not without sympathy in what Godfrey called his "Scotch pride." Now, if there was one thing that irritated Lieutenant Marsden more than another, it was any lament over Dunleath.

"So ridiculous," he said, "because a fellow once had a place in his family; some paltry Highland place, too, which nobody ever heard of except himself! Hanging on by departed consequence (such as it was), just to be able to give himself most intolerable airs about nothing at all."

"I don't think the paltriness of the place would make his regret more ridiculous," said Lady Margaret. "It was the inherited home of the family for centuries. I don't see why he should not be as fond of Dunleath as my brother of Lanark's Lodge, and with as good reason."

"I'll tell you what," said Godfrey, bluntly, "if Mr. Stuart was ill-looking and vulgar—not that I admire him; a meagre, self-conceited fellow, with a step that's half a saunter and half a stride—you ladies would give him up."

Lady Margaret colored violently. "I do not think Mr. Stuart has any vanity," said she, "though he might stand excused if he had. I remember his mother; she was the most beautiful human being I ever saw, and he is very like her. But it is quite possible, as you say, that with such weak creatures as we women are, Mr. Stuart's good looks may not be without their influence. On the other hand I do not see why any great grief or anxiety should not command one's sympathy, however misplaced we may think it. Objects we deem important are often trivial in the eyes of others; even the placing of our affections frequently seems absurd, especially with those who have no natural indulgence."

"Have I no natural indulgence, Lady Margaret?"

"Very little, either natural or acquired, I should think, Mr. Marsden," said she, with an arch smile. "You may be a good man; I believe you are a good man; I respect you. But you are not tender; you are not pitiful; you always take a harsh, scornful, suspicious view of things."

"I have quite as much indulgence, I think, as is consistent with strict justice."

"But strict justice is not what we are to deal out to one another in this world. God tries us all with such very different temptations. Only look round you, and consider what happens every day. One man is so surfeited with plenty, that his physician is extorting from him a promise to be more temperate, not to eat and drink to the injury of his own body; and another is in prison for stealing, may be, a loaf of bread, or a pound of bacon. One is crushed into sin by misery, and another pampered into it by luxury. How can we talk of dealing strict justice? Charity what is expected of us. The charity which *eth all things*, and comprehendeth all things, even the temptations that would be no temptation to ourselves. But I do not think you do allot strict justice to David Stuart."

"No?"

"No. What do you think of a man at his age, and with his talents and attractions, burying himself in the country for five or six years to educate a little girl? Is there nothing admirable in that? Nothing in his daily care and self-denial? Ay, even in his patience with yourself."

This new view of David's position and qualities exasperated Godfrey.

"Well, that is a little too much," said he. "No one asked the fellow to live here, except my poor mother, at a time when she was quite unfit to attend to business. It was done out of vanity, and to assume an authority he has no right to."

"He has an entire authority over Eleanor."

"His residence here was to please himself; he had little choice I should think."

"You are mistaken; the governor-general of India proposed to him to be his secretary, and my brother Lanark, though he never saw him, merely on the excellent report given of him, offered him five hundred a year, and a home at Lanark's Lodge, to undertake the management of affairs for him."

"Well?"

"Well, he refused. He said he was too fond of Eleanor to leave her till she was grown up, and had no further need of him."

"Eleanor is much indebted to him," said Godfrey with a sneer.

"I am indebted to him; I am most deeply grateful to him. I think you are very unjust!" exclaimed she, with some agitation of manner.

"To whom?"

"To Mr. Stuart, to me, to every one; I remember your speaking quite bitterly of one of your midshipmen on board your last ship, because he said having to keep watch at night, gave him inflammation in his eyes."

"Because I knew the boy was talking nonsense; shamming. I knew by my own feelings."

"But you can't know by your own feelings," said Lady Margaret. "Who made your mode of thinking and feeling the standard and example by which your fellow-creatures are to be tried? God made one man strong, and another weak; one dark, another fair; one merry, and another sad. One can not weep for sternness, and another's tears 'lie high,' as the phrase is. We are all as different as possible; we are all faulty, and we owe each other a continually running debt of indulgence; instead of which, we all walk through the world as if we were quite perfect, and provoked at not meeting with equal perfection."

"I am sure I don't expect to meet with perfection," said Godfrey.

"You always speak as if you did," interposed Eleanor. "I never yet heard of any one praised before you, even for efforts and good actions which you must have approved, that you did not say he was a poor, weak creature—or a vain, rash creature—or that he did it from ambition, or self-interest, or—"

"You are becoming extremely flippant, Eleanor. If I said so, it is probable the person of whom I made the remark deserved it."

"Very possibly," said Lady Margaret; "but I say that only proves human infirmity in general. Show me the man who is *not* vain, or weak, or rash, or ambitious, who does *not* in some way mix his human frailty with his work, doing the same amount of good. Till then, I thank the man who helps me to bear my burden, though he touch it with labor-stained hands, or carry it with a slow and feeble gait."

"If you don't care whether the persons you associate with, are worthy or unworthy, there is a difference in our notions on these subjects," said Godfrey, doggedly.

"That is a very childish way of closing the argument. I mean what I say; that I no more expect to meet perfection in others than to attain it myself. I believe not only every one has faults, but every one has some great leading and especial fault; and as long as that fault is neither a very mean, nor a very atrocious one—as long as I believe they do their best to balance their imperfect nature by such good as lies in their power, I am as ready to respect and love them as if my reason were a mole, and had no eyes to spy out their imperfections."

"Well, I am not."

"So it seems; but does it never strike you, that while you have no patience with one man because he is stingy, another because he is extravagant, a third because he is presumptuous, that there may be something in your own nature that makes them equally impatient? To exchange indulgence with them, fault for fault, would be best, don't you think?"

"I think, that in condemning where I see reason to condemn, I merely follow the principles of religion, and the dictates of common sense."

"Not of our religion, Mr. Marsden: you are a great reader of the Scriptures, but they can not bear that interpretation. In all the history of our Saviour, there is not one wrathful sentence—not one speech of condemnation. He had sympathy and compassion for all human infirmities; for sorrow, for sickness, even for repentant sin. He went about healing and pardoning. Whether it was Jairus wailing over his little daughter, or Lazarus's sisters weeping by a brother's tomb, or the lame beggar who vainly struggled to the blessed pool for cure; the gentle Jesus felt for all. The last bitter moments he spent on earth, hanging in torture on the Cross, were spent in speaking comfort to the penitent thief. There is nothing recorded after that, but his exclamation in the death-pang. Oh! if ever a lesson of indulgence could be taught to man, surely we might learn it there! Even to those who deny and doubt the divinity of Christ, his life must seem one great and complete emblem of universal toleration!"

She spoke eagerly—earnestly; the tears were in Eleanor's eyes. Godfrey turned away.

"I did not expect," said he, "that we should fall into a theological discussion *à-propos* of Mr. Stuart's merits; we have had enough of it, and of him."

Eleanor agreed in every word Lady Margaret had spoken: she loved her for what she said, and the way she said it: but her memory lingered capriciously over the sudden and violent blush with which her beautiful chaperon had received Godfrey's imputation of being influenced by Mr. Stuart's appearance, to more indulgence than an ugly and ungainly man would have inspired. Why did Lady Margaret blush about her guardian's good looks?

With restless curiosity Eleanor sought to glean the history of the past. Patiently as a bird builds its nest, she gathered materials—here a feather and there a straw—to build a fabric for fancy to lodge in. But with all her pains, she learnt little more than the simple facts told the first day she saw Lady Margaret: that chance had made the lovely lady and her guardian, neighbors at home and abroad, and that they were "great friends." Lady Margaret had been married to an elder brother of Mr. Fordyce, very much older than herself; and was a widow, not rich, with one little girl. They lived principally with the old Duchess of Lanark, Margaret's grandmother, at Naples, and they intended to return there at some indefinite time within the next two years, whenever the duchess recalled them.

Her gleanings and her conjectures were unprofitable and absorbing to Eleanor's mind. She no longer took any pleasure in her usual occupations. She lost her gayety, and became grave as she was when a little child. If she attempted to draw, visions of Dunleath rose up; scenes of early days; Mrs. Stuart and the Greek sundial; Lady Margaret and David as children wandering by the lake, or singing together on the hill-side among the heather, as she had heard her chaperon say they did. If she opened the piano, the keys remained untouched; while leaning her head on her hand in melancholy abstraction, she looked at the ivory notes as though they had done her some injury. The melodies Lady Margaret sang, floated through the dim silence. The thrill of those blended voices returned; every note, every cadence rose and fell as she had heard them the first evening, and often—too often since! If she endeavored to read—for it had become an endeavor—she was haunted by fragments of conversation, proving how far beyond her, in information and eloquence, was the new companion at Aspendale, the "old friend" of Dunleath and Naples.

Of all the pleasant occupations that had divided Eleanor's life into happy hours, riding was the only one that remained unchanged. Lady Margaret was a coward on horseback: she could not ride. When she stood under the portico, smiling in the sun, shading her eyes with her white hands to see them mount, Eleanor knew that for the next two hours, at least, the pleasant life was sure again. She felt her momentary superiority; she felt that she could have rode over precipices, and swum her horse through rivers and lakes, dark with the foam of a thousand thunder-storms, sooner than have forgone her rides with her guardian. She was conscious of a sort of gladness that Lady Margaret could not accompany them. They were the only hours now that she spent alone with the companion of her childhood.

It was in returning from one of these expeditions, that David Stuart gathered some of the heather in bloom, which grew in the wild broken ground beyond the roaring Linn. Eleanor carried some up to her room, to put in her hair when she dressed for dinner. As she laid it down, she saw, from her window, Lady Margaret coming from the garden with a quantity

of fresh roses in her basket. "Oh! heather—lovely heather! how it reminds one of the hills!" Eleanor heard her exclaim; and as she took them from Mr. Stuart's hand, she kissed the purple blossoms with childish delight, and put some in Euphemia's straw hat.

David Stuart smiled, and said something Eleanor could not hear; apparently he asked for a rose, for Lady Margaret carefully selected one and presented it to him; then he said something more, at which she laughed merrily, but also blushed; that deep sudden blush which was so lovely, which was so strange, which agitated and puzzled Eleanor so What had her guardian said? It must have been some comparison between her and the rose, and truly she was like one; or some allusion to the exchange they had made, for as he took the rose he pointed to the heather. What did it signify? What a wretched trifle to dwell upon! Why were such nothings become the only important moments in Eleanor's days? She looked down with a heavy sigh at Lady Margaret. They were still talking. She was feeding Mr. Stuart's horse with the roses, the beautiful roses she had just gathered; evidently she was not thinking of the flowers, she was thinking of what he said. What did he say? Presently the horse made a snatch at the remaining roses, and the basket fell from Lady Margaret's hand; she laughed, and Mr. Stuart called the groom to lead the horses away. Then Lady Margaret took his arm, and they walked back to the garden, little Euphemia tripping after them.

Eleanor stood still at her window; she heard the swinging of the shrubbery gate as they passed through, and the sweet joyous laugh of Lady Margaret, and the sound of receding steps on the gravel-path, and then she heard only the confused songs of many birds, the bleat of lambs in the distance, the hum of insects on the wing, all that aggregate of innumerable lives that men call silence. She leaned her head against the window-frame, and looked out on the sky and trees and the road before the house, lost in thought.

Reader, I once saw a flower blow. It was a superb specimen of that glorious bulb, the amaryllis. For its own sake it stood in the window, to glean the two hours of sunshine of a London sky; for the sake of the giver it stood near me, that from time to time, when I looked up from my reading, I might, as the French say, "caress it with my eye." Suddenly a sharp sound as of the striking of a large insect's wing against the glass, made me glance upward. I saw it—I saw that daily and hourly miracle of nature, in its act of completion: my flower blew; not as the rose blows, day by day unfolding its soft leaves a little and a little more in gradual beauty; but suddenly, with a glad start, flinging its deep rose-colored leaves asunder, the heart of my young amaryllis lay bare to the light, and the sun saw a new worshiper on the strong green stem which daily drew light from his glory. It was the act of a moment; but no human hand, no skill, no art, could have forced the shining petals back to their calyx. My flower had blown: to live its life of dumb loveliness, to look, as it did then, fresh as the dews of the morning; and afterward waning in its beauty, to grow dimmer and more earthly, till a new and different compression should shrink those long pointed leaves, and bid them hang brown and withered, from the cup which was their cradle and their grave!

As my flower blew that morning to the natural sun, so woke the heart of Eleanor Raymond to the sun of love. Innocent and guileless as she was, brought up in seclusion, knowing nothing of the world or its ways, she was yet too passionate by nature to doubt the meaning of all she felt and thought. She suddenly comprehended that in her chaperon she feared a possible rival; that she loved David Stuart; that his marriage with Lady Margaret, or any other except herself, was a thought dark with jealous misery.

No new ray had fallen on her life, no phase of change had altered it, but the hour had come. Alone, musing, with her sweet face turned like that flower to the light, the red flush of sudden consciousness swept over her cheek, and she almost whispered to herself the thought, "It is because I love him."

She loved! She too, might bloom, and wane, and wither, but her heart could not be forced back to unconsciousness, any more than the leaves of my amaryllis to the cold green calyx that had inclosed them.

She loved him. Well, why not? She could marry him. It was a triumphant thought that she had wealth and comfort to give in addition to herself; that she did not come to him through poverty, and doubt, and difficulty, as Emma had come to Godfrey, but with all the advantages that could make earthly happiness easy. He need not, like Godfrey, have a dangerous uncertain profession to take him away from home, and leave his wife to listen to the stormy winds, praying for those at sea. Perpetual companionship, unbroken, undisturbed, would be theirs. They would go about doing good together, welcomed by their equals, beloved by the poor. It was a visionary life of calm and entire happiness. She would marry him: that is, if he loved her. If! What was she, that she should be preferred to Margaret? Margaret, with her wondrous beauty, playful wit, earnest goodness, and eloquence? And yet she thought he loved her. Now she could explain to herself those strange nervous contradictions of manner that had so tormented her; his sadness and abstraction at times. Yes, certainly, he loved her.

If he loved Margaret, why remain at Aspendale? why refuse the Duke of Lanark's offer through her of a home at Lanark's Lodge, and a settled destiny among Lady Margaret's own people? Surely he loved *her*, loved Eleanor his ward, his companion, his wife that would be. Perhaps he himself had viewed his position as Godfrey had viewed it, when he desired her to be more dignified in manner toward one who had been only her father's man of business—as if the mere want of riches on his part was to divide them! And a superb scorn for riches curled the lip of the young heiress. He wished her to see the world, and make a choice; but he would find her choice was made, and the world could not alter it. Whom could she see in that unknown world to be compared to him? Even Lady Margaret had spoken of his superiority to others in talent and attraction. Her mother had talked, half playfully, half in earn-

est, of the great match her little heiress was to make; but a great match is a very vague temptation at Eleanor's age. What did she want with rank and grandeur? Her ideal happiness was to be Mrs. David Stuart, and Mrs. David Stuart she would be!

CHAPTER XII.

GREAT restlessness and disturbance of mind, even without any very heavy or painful anxiety, are bad for the health; and Eleanor, who could scarcely eat her dinner, for watching and calculating the great mystery of whether it were possible that Lady Margaret was more agreeable than herself to her guardian, became as thin and pale as a sage who, with alembic and crucible, had wasted his nights and days searching for the philosopher's stone. The doctor was called in. When doctors are a little puzzled, they always say the patient requires "change of air;" and accordingly it was decided that Eleanor should have change of air. Godfrey proposed they should make a trip to Portsmouth. He had business at Portsmouth. The port admiral was an old friend of Sir John Raymond's. Lady Raymond would come, too, and then they could all go to the Isle of Wight. All but Lady Margaret—she disliked sailing, even more than riding; she was always sea-sick; she would pay a visit to some Fordyce relations while they were gone; and when they returned, if Eleanor was well, they would go to London for the season.

Eleanor felt a pang of self-reproach at the secret gladness with which she heard these arrangements, which excluded her chaperon. That lovely and most lovable creature, who had become so fond of her, was it possible that she actually rejoiced at leaving her behind, when they set out on their holiday expedition? I am afraid it was both possible and true.

A real holiday, however, it was to Eleanor. The sea-breeze, the quantity of new objects, the long happy days, during which her guardian had nothing to do but to attend to her, brought back the color to her cheek, and the light to her eye. Her mother, too, was more than usually tender to her. Anxiety for her health was mingled with memories of her father; for Lady Raymond had never been at Portsmouth, that city of farewells, since she sailed for India with Sir John; and when she had said her gentle good-night to Eleanor the first evening they were away from Aspendale, she still detained her, wistfully gazing in her face, till at last she laid her head, with a few feeble tears, on her daughter's bosom, and faltered out the words:

"You are all that remains to me of *him*, my dear child."

Eleanor felt grateful and happy. She was not superseded, as usual, by the overpowering love her mother bore to Godfrey. But Godfrey also was satisfied; he was in his element at Portsmouth, and his spirits were elated by the comparative insignificance to which Mr. David Stuart was reduced.

Godfrey was only a lieutenant in the navy. He was nobody in himself, but he knew a great many people. He was respected in his profession. There was great interest shown to the party he brought with him: the pretty, quiet wife; the pale and lovely heiress, his half-sister; and his mother, the widow of a man who had held an important command in India. Admirals and captains, who would under ordinary circumstances merely have returned the young lieutenant's stiff well-disciplined salute, relaxed into a thousand agreeable attentions to Lady Raymond and her daughter. They were shown over ships, and accompanied through dock-yards, and taken to see the forging of anchors and the making of blocks. Many of the senior officers remembered Sir John, and were struck with the good sense and intelligence shown by "poor Raymond's daughter." They complimented Godfrey on his half-sister. As to Mr. David Stuart, no one thought about him; he dropped naturally into the rear; and when one of the officers asked another who that very good-looking fellow was, who belonged to Lady Raymond's party, his position was vaguely and carelessly marked out as having been "Sir John Raymond's secretary, or something."

All this was as it should be, and Godfrey was exceedingly well pleased. His manner to David Stuart involuntarily resumed something of the old imperiousness with which he used to inquire into the state of affairs, "in order to advise his mother on her plans;" and he secretly hoped that Eleanor would be sufficiently struck by the evidence of her guardian's real position in the world, to relax in the sentimental reverence she showed for his opinions and sayings. But Eleanor was lost in dreams; she did not notice all this. She was musing on ships and ship wrecks; Otaheite and Captain Cook; the life of Columbus, and the death of Nelson; the courage of the man who first ventured to sea the wonderful discovery of the compass; all sorts of wandering, crowding thoughts chased each other through her mind.

She and Emma stood close together, looking at the immense hot anchor they had just seen welded, from which the slant sparks were still flying, under the blows of the workmen. That giant anchor, what ship would it belong to? what would be her destiny? Smooth harbors in lovely southern isles rose to Eleanor's fancy; the palm and cocoa-nut growing up in the tropic sky; gorgeous birds of brilliant plumage flitting about; savages, graceful, idle, kindly, and innocent, like the Incas of yore; and the ship coming in slowly, full sail, looking (as ships do look) more full of conscious life and volition, than any other thing put together by the industry and science of man. Then the scene changed. Eleanor saw the ship drifting over the boundless ocean in a midnight storm; her masts cut away, her rigging shattered, crowds of wave-washed men struggling to save her, to save themselves; the roar of the winds and the mountainous billows sounded in her ear, overwhelming the voice of the captain shouting to his crew. Thought is lightning quick. Eleanor had got to the island Shakspeare peopled; to Ariel, Caliban, and that wreck,

"Which had no doubt some noble creatures in her,"

when Emma spoke:

"What a great strong thing it is," said Emma. "I had no idea an anchor was so big! I hope Godfrey will be sure to have a strong one when

he has a ship. He must be a commander first. I hope he will soon be a commander."

Eleanor's visions vanished. She looked round and smiled at her guardian. He came forward a little.

"Don't remain longer in this heat," said he, anxiously. "You look as pale as Miranda when she was expostulating with Prospero."

Eleanor moved away, leaning on the admiral's arm, and smiled again brightly and fondly at David Stuart. He, too, she found, was thinking of Shakspeare's island. It was pleasant to her to know that his thoughts were the same as her own. They would talk it all over in the evening, all she had seen in that crowd and company of strangers.

Godfrey would have been in despair, could he have guessed how very different the impression made on his half-sister's mind was to the one he desired. I am sure he never could have walked on with that cheerful determined air by Lady Raymond's side, had he known that Eleanor was yearning for the hour when this parade would be over, and home-chat with her guardian begin; or even that the enthusiastic young officer, with whom David brought up the rear, was listening to him as to a sort of demi-god, because he had been on board an East Indiaman when she was burnt; interrupting his description of that event by a running commentary of ejaculation: "Oh, sir! what a scene, sir! You are a fortunate man, sir, to have been in her! I wish I had been there, sir!" and other brief sentences, expressive of the satisfaction it would have afforded him to have had to struggle for life among charred timbers and floating wreck, after taking his choice of the chances of being burned or drowned. And David and he shook each other by the hand, at the gate of the dock-yard, with immense cordiality, much to Godfrey's discomfiture, who wished Mr. Stuart to feel a little humbled and mortified, and was disturbed by his apparent unconsciousness.

Apparent; not real! This peep into the future, this vision of Eleanor removed from him by the common course of worldly events, was not otherwise than comfortless to David's heart; but his heart was full of other and heavier anxieties. As it was, however, it trebled the value of her smile; that silent method of communion which no crowd can prevent persons who know each other well from interchanging. Eleanor's smile, too, was peculiarly beautiful. Her expression, habitually grave and shy, changed to a sort of loving tenderness rather than gayety when she smiled, fading slowly back to its original gravity—as unlike Lady Margaret's glowing brilliancy as possible, but beautiful in its way. David pondered over her smile; and again, and again, as it often did, the recollection of her countenance as a child, came back to him—as a child, listening to him and pitying him in the early happy days. That God to whom all hearts are open, alone could tell why the recollection was fraught with pain to David Stuart; why there came over his own face the cloud of a momentary wild anxiety, and from his unclosed lips the moan of an unspoken prayer.

They crossed to the Isle of Wight. In vain had that little cockney-paradise been trodden by millions of pleasure-seekers; in vain had the *colored sands* of Alum Bay found their way to innumerable toy-shops throughout the kingdom. To Eleanor all was new, fresh, and delightful. The honey-smelling creepers that grew on the gray stones and low walls at Niton; the deep-green waves that crept in and out of the cavern at Freshwater, the gleaming-white rocks of the Needles, the sunny days, the moonlights on the ocean, transported her with joy. Never was holiday planned that was so completely successful. When she received a letter from Lady Margaret, she almost hesitated to open it, lest some expression of regret or anxiety should break the spell of undisturbed delight in all around her; but Lady Margaret wrote very merrily.

"I am here," she said, "among my country relations; very learned and well-informed people; even the children are so over-instructed, that I prepared for a visit to the nursery as for a college little-go examination. My friends are agricultural, but by no means simple folks. The process of tilling the earth, which used to be easy, is now performed by the most complex experiments. 'As ignorant as a plow-boy,' is a phrase fallen into disuse. Instead of 'whistling o'er the lea,' he goes calculating o'er the lea what species of manure will produce 'an interstitial crop.' Mr. H. grows turnips like phœnixes out of their own ashes, and has just discovered that chalk will make as good a fire as coal.

"Conceive our old, familiar friend the coal-scuttle, wearing a new face, and dismally presenting itself to notice, with half-a-bushel of white, ghastly, cheerless lumps, for all the world like the ghosts of the coals we burned in our childhood! 'Old King *Coal* was a jolly old soul,' his successor is a horror. All the pretty little endearing ways, all the playful fancies of our fire are extinguished forever. None of the flickering and flaming bursts of gas and tar, mute brilliancies that were to us, as we sat alone, what jests and repartees are in conversation! but a dull, smouldering, prosaic, detestable way of warming one's self. Even Mrs. Ellis will never teach the women of England to make their firesides pleasant under such circumstances.

"The fire is put out, and so are we; we can not accustom our minds to the new embarrassment. What are we to do with our old tropes, similies, and metaphors? What will be the use of talking of the flame of love to a generation who burn red-hot chalk? What is to become of that pleasant, confidential time, the hour before a winter dinner, when the November fire asserted its claim to be 'light enough to talk by?" Shall we ever be able to tell each other any thing worth hearing by chalk and candle-light? Our fire was a friendly companion—a kindler of cheerfulness—a household god. We talked of old memories and hopes to its cinders. Can we sit by the chalk, like billiard-markers? I rebel; I, for one, set my face against the pale intruder, and desperately insist on coals. Indeed, altogether, I am getting so tired of a pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, that I long to have a pursuit of ignorance. Oh! for an unenlightened friend! Oh! for a dear dolt, who doesn't comprehend or try experiments! I think of advertising in the Times: 'Wanted, as companion to a lady, a Stupid Person; preference will be given to one who can not write or read.'

"Meanwhile, I am glad to be able to write

and read, that I may be able to write to you, and hear from you. Tell me all you do and see. Tell me of the regatta—if it is time for that beautiful sight; where the small vessels chase each other like a flight of sea-gulls over the water. Tell me of the charming nondescript young noblemen and gentlemen you will meet at Cowes. How well I remember their dress! The roughest of sailors' dreadnoughts, with polished French boots, satin stocks, and turquoise shirt-pins. Some habited like sailors before the mast (always excepting the boots and studs), some inclining to be corsairs and Greek gallion-gees, with white trowsers and scarlet sashes, (very handsome, I recollect, they looked), and some actually prowling about the sands in shooting-jackets (without a keeper), so prevalent was the mania for costume.

"Do not lose your heart to any of them before I have formally introduced you to the London world You will hardly know them again when you meet them there.

"Give my kind regards to all with you and believe me,

"Yours affectionately,

"MARGARET FORDYCE."

"No, she does not love him—she can not love him—or she would not write so merrily," was Eleanor's reflection, as she folded the letter, and looked out over the sea; and her heart seemed to lean and rest itself on that thought.

But pleasant holidays must end. The Admiralty yacht was sent from Portsmouth to fetch Lady Raymond and her daughter, as the last kindly compliment from the officer who had known Sir John; and with many a lingering glance around her, Eleanor stepped into the boat with the rest of her party, and was taken on board. The wind seemed to have guessed her reluctance to leave the island; for, after lazily impelling the "Fanny" about one-third of her course, it fell to a dead calm. The slackening sails flapped noiselessly to and fro, and then hung like a dead bird's wings against the masts. Godfrey fidgeted, and took short turns on deck. Eleanor sat apart, gazing on the sunset sky. She was thinking again of Lady Margaret; what she had lost by declining to accompany them—by not being able to sail—by not being able to ride—and how, in a few days, they should all be together again.

"What a heavenly evening," said she to David Stuart, as he came and sat down by her. "Look at those soft, strange tints, which melt so gradually that you can not tell where one begins and another ends; and yet one side of the sky is ruby-crimson, and the other sapphire blue. How still! how lovely!—now, could I fancy myself a spirit journeying with its guardian angel to another world: but we are going back to the real common world, and its busy people!" and Eleanor heaved a sigh.

"We will have another holiday when the London season is over," said David.

"I wish it was over, or never to begin; I have no wish to see the world at all; I shall never be able to talk to strangers. Am I clever, Guardy? When I had no one but Emma Fordyce to compare myself with, I felt as if I was; and now that I compare myself with Lady Margaret—"

"She is nearly six-and-twenty, and you are scarcely seventeen. That is a superiority of age; it is one which involves others: a little more reading of books and men, a little more knowledge of the world, and a greater aptitude of conversation. When your understanding is matured, I think you will master difficult subjects with greater ease than Lady Margaret You need not doubt your own powers.

"'And every spirit as it is more pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light;
So it the fairer body doth procure,
To habit in.'"

David repeated Spenser's beautiful lines in a low, murmuring tone; he was watching Eleanor, who had taken off her bonnet, and was looking down into the fathomless sea. There she beheld the ever-haunting image of Lady Margaret's lovely face. Was she, indeed, six-and-twenty—so near thirty? She thought women near thirty ought to look a little withered, and faded, and old. That radiant creature—was it possible? The wonder occupied her so, that she did not heed the compliment to her own beauty conveyed in the lines her guardian had quoted. Presently he spoke again:

"Your mind has made a great start lately, Eleanor."

"I have read so much and so carefully. I have felt my own deficiency so much more. When I hear you talking with Lady Margaret, I feel how immeasurably inferior I am. I comprehend what a sacrifice you made, settling at Aspendale with an invalid and a foolish child, instead of such society as would suit you."

"Do you think you do not suit me?"

"I think," said she earnestly, though with some embarrassment of manner, "that not understanding a person on the subjects which interest them, puts one in a sort of exile from them. I have felt, when some subject was started of which I was wholly ignorant, as if there were suddenly a great gap between us, over which I longed to throw a bridge. Those who have read the same books, and know the same things, must be more welcome to you—more constantly in your thoughts—"

Eleanor stopped, confused. David answered, in an agitated voice,

"No one is constantly in my thoughts but you, Eleanor. Would to God it were otherwise, continued he, passionately and sorrowfully. "Waking or sleeping, abroad or at home, in the hush of study or the tumult of business, I see your dear eyes between me and my books—between me and the sky—between me and all that is in heaven and earth, reproaching me!"

"Reproaching you!"

At this moment an exclamation from the man at the helm, an imperious shout from Godfrey, and a sudden confusion on board, startled them.

"We shall be run down!" said David.

Lady Raymond and Emma shrieked; the sailors swore; Godfrey shouted again. A heavy black brig drifted down upon them; there was no wind, either to increase the danger, or enable them to evade it. Every one seemed asleep on board the brig, except the watch on deck. After a moment of terror, confusion, and noise, the vessels glided free of each other, grazing slightly as they passed. With a mechanical impulse of

protection, David Stuart had encircled Eleanor with one arm, while he clung to the ropes with the other. He released her gently; and as he replaced the heavy boat cloak in which she had been sheltered, but which had dropped from her shoulders as she started up in alarm, he murmured tenderly:

"Were you frigetened, dearest child?"

Eleanor strove to answer, "No!" Her heart beat wildly; she felt no fear; she only felt that if they had all died at that moment, she could have died happy; that if they had sunk down in that cold sea, and perished there, she would have been contented to know, as she yielded up life in his arms, that no one wiser, or better, or cleverer, or more beautiful than herself, could part her from David Stuart. Such a death had no terrors. In the strange excitement of the hour, when he praised her for her courage, she lifted her shy, averted eyes for an instant, with the desperate words trembling on her lips:

"Why should I fear to die, dying with you?"

It was but for an instant. The shy eyes were vailed more timidly than ever, and the wild, passionate thought sunk down again to her heart, as a frightened and weary bird sinks fluttering down on its nest.

CHAPTER XIII.

ELEANOR MAKES A CONQUEST.

THE arrangements for a season in London were now to be made, a house to be taken, a double establishment formed, with Lady Margaret as head. She could not offer Eleanor a home—she had none of her own.

Since her widowhood, she had lived principally with the dowager duchess, in Italy. Her brother at first intended that she should reside with him, but that did not suit his wife.

The Duchess of Lanark, though she had also many merits, had a great fault. Lady Margaret, in her sweet, cheerful way, said every one had their fault, and we should be prepared to make allowance. The Duchess of Lanark's fault was one very opposite to Margaret's nature. Her pretty little Grace was of a very jealous disposition. She did not like going out with her sister-in-law. She loved and admired Margaret, but she was restless when others did the same. Somehow she felt eclipsed in her own home, when Margaret was there. The perfect tact which springs from perfect temper taught Margaret what to do. She never sang at Lanark's Lodge. The duchess did not like people to sing, unless they sang contralto seconds, and unfortunately Lady Margaret's voice went to C in alt. She never played the harp: the duchess played the harp—played it beautifully, wonderfully; with arms as white and perfect as those which the Venus Anadyomene might have lifted above the sea-foam, and little pink-tipped, rapid fingers, so delicate and taper, that you felt, as a French attaché once told the duchess, that "it was *merveilleux* how they could pinch the cords," so as to produce such full-sounding, pleasant music as they did. Then Margaret had to dress Euphemia with great simplicity. The duchess did not like the child to be confounded with her cousins the Ladies Maitland, especially since a certain occasion, when some stranger, imagining Phemy to be the duke's youngest daughter, told him that she was the prettiest, and resembled him the most, of all his children.

This childish jealousy of temper had given rise to occasional summer-storms, in spite of Margaret's willingness to "efface herself" in behalf of her sister-in-law. The latter had fits of displeasure, extremely puzzling to lookers-on, and puzzling at first to Margaret, inasmuch as it was impossible to reconcile the degree of anger with the apparent cause; nor was the pretty duchess herself, perhaps, always aware of the real root of her *guignon* against her good-humored sister-in-law. She never analyzed her feelings, or attempted to control them. She had been a spoiled child, and she was now a wife, cherished and indulged, perhaps, beyond her actual deserts.

But Margaret grew accustomed to the peevish little reproaches made on trivial occasions, and, with her usual generosity, she "made allowance."

In the main, the duchess was kind; she always meant kindly. Her feelings were quick and keen. In hours of affliction and distress, she was tender and loving. She grudged neither time nor trouble to render service; but in the prosperity of those she had served, she grew restless. She could wipe away their tears, but they must beware how their smiles occupied or distracted any of the numerous circle whose duty it was to bow down only to her graceful little self. Any one was welcome to stand next her, but none above her; and in the matter of conquests and admiration, people must only glean what she left. She was not positively glad when strangers thought Phemy awkward or her beautiful mother too large in figure, but she was more complacent.

Margaret, too, had her fault. I never saw perfection in real life, or any where but in the pages of some impossible romance. I am loth to admit it, and I hope the reader will remember that I mention it in the strictest confidence, but I think Margaret was a little vain of being so very charming as she certainly was, and was admitted to be by all who had the happiness of knowing her. She was vain, too, of comprehending the leading questions in politics, and subjects which are generally supposed to interest men only. She was glad to be popular with women, and even children, but she was proud of being popular with men; and popular she was, to her heart's content. From her brother, Lanark, who simply thought there had been nothing like her since Eve was presented to Adam in Paradise, to the chance acquaintance who had the good luck to sit by her at dinner the day before, a unanimous vote was always given in her favor. The sweet cordiality of her manner had no forwardness in it, and was balanced by a certain stateliness and dignity, hereditary and natural; while her perfect temper, active kindliness, sincere and unostentatious piety, increased to love the admiration already inspired by her gayety, accomplishments, and beauty.

Now the lovely little Duchess of Lanark belonged, as I have already hinted, to a class of women it is difficult to define—the class of conquest-makers; women who look on at a tempta-

tion they do not feel, and which they have no intention of sharing; women, many of whom I firmly believe would rather die than overstep the boundary which divides them from sin, but who can not resist the dangerous triumph of encouraging the victims of their beauty. She took great pains to secure her conquests, even to the risk of her fair name; but if any admirer ventured to declare himself, she was amazed, annoyed, and generally quarreled with him, throwing herself on the frank-hearted affection of her husband for protection against what rumors might arise out of the event, and visiting with unsparing dislike whoever was the next object of attention—a dog-in-the-manger system of coquetry not uncommon among women of the world.

The Duke of Lanark was a very proud man, and of a trustful disposition. He thought his wife rash; he believed her true; he did not choose that the world should probe what he felt. So, gravely, calmly, with what unconsciousness he could assume, he bore the occasional brunt of evil reports. So borne, they died away or passed lightly over. He took his own part against the world—instead of making common cause with the world against himself, as is the custom with some men.

The duchess respected and felt grateful to him. If she did not absolutely relinquish conquest-making, she indulged more rarely in a heart-hunt. It was a home that bettered as years rolled on; but it was a home in which Margaret was *de trop*. It was impossible to make conquests comfortably, with Margaret in the house. Her beauty dazzled and absorbed the most frivolous; and something real, honest, and earnest in her nature, attracted the serious. I doubt whether the last thought at night of two-thirds of the guests in any country-house where she happened to be staying, was not satisfaction at the certainty of meeting her fresh, glad smiles at breakfast next morning. There might be those who would deny that they thought about her at all, but I would not give much credit to the assertion.

And so it was, that Margaret became an occasional visitor, not a resident at Lanark's Lodge; remaining on the best possible terms with her graceful little sister-in-law, who wrote her very long letters and professed (and indeed felt) a very sincere interest in all that concerned her.

Almost the first people Eleanor saw in London, were the Duke and Duchess of Lanark, and she heard them announced and looked at the duke as he entered, with eager interest. In complexion, and a certain frank stateliness of demeanor, there might be a likeness to Margaret, but in nothing else. The duchess was lovely; very small in stature, but with the figure of a nymph; large, soft, surprised eyes, like a child's; a little affected, and excessively graceful.

Eleanor was disappointed in the duke's appearance; she had expected Margaret's brother to be wonderfully handsome; but in character they were the counterpart of each other, and she sighed to think what a happy brother and sister they were, and how unlike the terms on which she and Godfrey lived, was the proud fondness they felt for each other.

The duke saw her, too, with interest; and his manner to his sister's charge was one of protecting tenderness. It was his manner to all women—the feeling of his heart toward them. No shadow of jealousy could have entered even his duchess's mind, and yet all women felt instinctively that he was one from whom indulgence and chivalry to the sex were certain. Many women envied the duchess her home: but it is not always the women who have happy homes who set most value on them.

Eleanor did not like London. Perhaps no one does, who is brought suddenly into that great whirlpool, and does not stay long enough to form their own circle among the eddies on the surface. Long enough to make slight acquaintances, but not to form friendships; long enough to see the fermenting of the scum, but not to taste the wholesome liquor underneath; to see the insolence, jealousy, frivolty, and mad battles of fashion, but not to learn that, with a few pampered and incorrigible instances, good hearts arise out of that turmoil, and go forth to home duties, to great charities, and rational employment of their portion of that divine inheritance—Time.

Eleanor's tastes, too, were essentially solid. She was amazed at the ballet, and bored at the balls. Dancing had no charms for her; reading, painting, riding, music, were her holiday occupations. These her guardian taught her; these he could share in. He was gone to Marseilles on business, and the London season struggled on without him.

When it was over, never was there a beautiful young heiress so glad to return to the country. She left London without regret, and her general acquaintance saw her go with indifference; the men said she was cold and absent; the women that she was shy and stupid; the duke wondered that she had not been able to "catch something of Margaret's charming manner;" the duchess (with rather doubtful sympathy) observed that her sister-in-law "extinguished" poor Miss Raymond. Yet Eleanor's beauty was undeniable. There was no brilliancy, no contrast; nymph-like, classical, colorless—the pale red of the small melancholy mouth, the gray hazel of the shy, passionate eyes, the soft brown of her luxuriant hair, all melting into one harmony of tint like a fair Italian picture—she stood before you. In vain the women said she wanted complexion; the men that she was too stately; the dancers that she was awkward; the fashionable (in spite of Margaret's reforms) that she was ill-dressed. You felt, when all was said, that there stood the type of the old ideal loveliness, worshiped in the groves and temples of olden times; when the heathen heart, unenlightened and unable to reclaim even its divine aspirations from the trammels of sensuality, adored the Creator in form instead of spirit, and knelt to beauty as the nearest idea of God! Lone as a statue in a garden, she stood in that busy, murmuring world; and recalled to you other statues; fountains, and fair columns; the dim aisles of foreign churches; the shadows of cypresses on warm Italian terraces; all that the eye could conceive or remember of classic perfection. She was the beau-ideal of an artist's dream—the moving frontispiece to a poet's thought.

And like many other such ideal-looking personages, the strongest passion that Eleanor in-

spired, during her brief stay in London, was in a heart as coarse as ever was cast in nature's mould. Many young men, of small means and great expenses, thought of proposing for the beautiful heiress. One or two were seriously enamored, or thought themselves so; but only Sir Stephen Penrhyn turned pale with sudden emotion when he heard they were to leave town. Only Sir Stephen Penrhyn came, at a late undue hour in his boots and frock-coat, to the Duke of Lanark's library, to ask his advice, having been wandering about all day considering how he could plead his cause, and whom he had best plead it to; and convinced (that greatest proof of love) that the whole world of bachelors were forthwith about to propose for Miss Raymond, and that therefore his only chance lay in immediate measures for securing her hand.

Their acquaintance had not begun very auspiciously. Eleanor was riding over Wimbledon Common with the Duke of Lanark and a party of ladies and gentlemen, when her dog Ruellach suddenly chased the dog belonging to a gentleman in advance of the party. The animals quarreled, and Ruellach, who was much the most powerful, had seized his adversary by the throat; when the gentleman whose dog was worsted, hastily dismounting, threw the reins of his horse to his groom, and violently chastised the enemy with a heavy riding-whip. Eleanor's cheek crimsoned, and her eyes filled with tears.

"The man will kill my dog!" said she.

The Duke of Lanark rode up to the stranger.

"I am sure you are not aware," said he, courteously, "that the grayhound belongs to a lady in our party: to this young lady," added he, as Sir Stephen Penrhyn turned round with an angry stare, and Eleanor cantered her horse to the spot.

Cymon when he was softened by the sight of Iphigenia, could not have been more struck than the stranger at the aspect of Eleanor; flushed, tearful, a mixture of indignation, reproach, and compassion, agitating her beautiful features. He stammered out apologies; he wiped the dog's foot, which was cut by one of the heavy blows of the whip, with his handkerchief. He pleaded with Eleanor that the dog had pursued and chased his own without provocation, and that it was a formidable-looking creature. There was nothing for it but to bow and accept his excuses, and turn homeward; poor Ruellach limping along by Eleanor's horse, footsore, bleeding, and greatly exhausted by the violent beating he had received.

"Ruellach, poor friend," Eleanor said to him in tender, comforting tones, from time to time. "Ruellach, poor friend," she repeated, as she sate looking at him after they reached home; lying on the carpet, turning on her, while she spoke, a grateful glance from wistful, sleepy, bloodshot eyes, his foot swelled, and starting with pain. And she thought of the day her guardian brought the poor dumb companion from Scotland, two years ago, that seemed two ages; and of the dreadful strength of that man's arm, as he unmercifully lashed it; and Eleanor felt, on behalf of herself and her dog, that she was extremely ill-used.

From that day forth Sir Stephen Penrhyn haunted Eleanor Raymond like her shadow. He had never seen her before. He did not be*long to the* "smart set" of London society; he had not cared to belong to it. But now every one who gave or procured for him invitations which insured his meeting Miss Raymond, commanded his gratitude; and as he had the reputation of being very rich, people were glad to oblige him. He got up late, to begin the day as near as possible to the hour when he might see her. He called incessantly; he paid Ruellach the most devoted attention; he lingered in the park even when Eleanor was riding and occupied with others, till he saw her leave it. He ate his dinner in a sort of dream, as something done to fill up a gap of time in which he could not be in her society. There was no luxury he did not lend or give to a boy cousin of Lady Margaret's, a pretty little dandy getting through his first season in London on two hundred a year, who got numberless invitations for "his friend Penrhyn," and told him what parties Eleanor was going to every evening.

Sir Stephen's Highland place, Castle Penrhyn, was in a very fair Scotch neighborhood of Lanark's Lodge; that is, about twenty miles distant. The duke knew his family: he received him very civilly and cordially. Lady Margaret gave him bright smiles, and jested Eleanor on her conquest. Even Ruellach, poor generous, forgiving Ruellach, welcomed him when he came with mute tokens of friendly recognition. Eleanor alone remained cold and shy; but then she was cold and shy to every one. So every one said; and Mr. David Stuart was not there to contradict the opinion.

The duke, who was accustomed to the frank, impulsive manner of his beloved sister, and the demonstrativeness of his graceful little duchess, declined offering any opinion as to the absence of evident preference in Eleanor's mode of treating her would-be suitor. He advised Sir Stephen to write to Mr. Stuart, and explain himself; and then no doubt he would receive an invitation from Lady Raymond, and might ascertain what chance he had of pleasing her daughter. At present, Mr. Stuart was still at Marseilles; but in a short time he was expected at Aspendale. The duke did not know him; he had never met him; he could only therefore refer Sir Stephen to Lady Margaret for conjectures how Eleanor's guardian was likely to receive proposals for his ward, and what sort of person he was. And Lady Margaret blushed scarlet, and said Mr. Stuart was a most amiable and excellent person, and would think only of what would best secure Eleanor's happiness, to whom of course Sir Stephen must make himself acceptable as best he could. She had not perceived that Eleanor had distinguished any one. She was always shy. Did not think she was more distant with Sir Stephen, than with other acquaintance. On the contrary.

And with the slender comfort of this "on the contrary," as a wind-up to all his questions, Sir Stephen Penrhyn saw that strange beautiful vision of a girl so unlike all the women he had ever met in his life, vanish from the haunts where he had daily contrived to meet her. I do not know any thing more dismally blank than London when the *one* person has left it, or any thing more curious than the impression given, by the absence of a unit out of the countless population, that the great swarming city has been emptied of all its inhabitants. When Sir

Stephen's valet asked for orders for the groom next day, his master had none to give. It did not appear to him that there was any where to ride to. He took a sauntering, moody walk, mechanically bending his steps to the Serpentine; his eye wandered over the mass of open and closed carriages, equestrian and pedestrian passers-by, without particularizing. He knew there was nothing to see—no one to recognize. *She* had left town! Life was at a standstill till he could write to Mr. Stuart, and receive an answer; a wind-mill whose sails had stopped work

CHAPTER XIV.

PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE.

Mr. David Stuart returned from Marseilles thin and dispirited. He said he had had a great deal of trouble, and a great deal of fatigue; and it was some time before even Margaret's cheerful laugh and winning ways, could sun him into comparative cheerfulness. As to Eleanor, poor little chameleon that she was, she felt far more inclined to take the reflection of his sadness into her own soul, than to remove it by—

"Quips and cranks and wreathed smiles."

They did not talk much of the London season, or the time they had been asunder. She had written to him all she thought important or entertaining during their stay in town. They relapsed into old habits, and old subjects of thought, and resumed former occupations: the rides which were so delightful to Eleanor, and the songs which no longer disturbed her so much; for she began to feel instinctively sure that it was with *her*, not Margaret, that David's thoughts were absorbed: and when his eyes wore that look of wistful supplication she first saw in them the day they talked of churches by the roaring Linn —the day he entreated her to "bear with him" —she translated it in her own way: into the doubt and fear that must cloud the progress of an attachment, which the world would think so imprudent on her part.

He evidently struggled against it; he would not suffer people to say he took advantage of his position as her guardian, and his residence at Aspendale, to persuade her to a marriage her friends must disapprove. Miss Raymond comprehended this: three months of a London season teaches us more than six years in the country. She comprehended that the choice which she had made to satisfy herself, would be extremely unsatisfactory to others. She guessed what "the world" would say. She had made its acquaintance in Hyde Park, at the Opera, and at Almack's. She knew how it wagged its tongue on all occasions, and how adverse its decision on her affairs would be. She did not care about the world; but she was sorry and perplexed when she thought of her mother. The account of her success in those realms of fashion of which Lady Raymond had never more than brief glimpses, roused more ambition in the gentle widow to see Eleanor make a splendid match, than had as yet been obvious to her daughter; and Lady Raymond had above all things a horror of poverty—she had experienced it. Godfrey, though he had married for love himself, Eleanor knew would sneer at her choice, and blame the object of it. But she was determined, nevertheless; only she rather shrank from looking into the future. She wished things to remain as they were for the present, till she was of age, perhaps, when no one could suppose her incapable of judging matters with the worldly wisdom peculiar to that venerable time of life.

Now and then, it is true, when her guardian seemed more than usually unhappy, she longed, restlessly, for some event that should force an explanation, which would put an end to his pain and uncertainty. That event would be, of course, some one else proposing for her: she would refuse: her guardian would ask her why: she would reply that she loved another. He would ask who: nothing could be more simple so far: and she would tell him, at least she thought and hoped she should, by that time, have courage to give him to understand—the truth: but at present the very thought set her heart beating with such exceeding terror and confusion, that certainly Mr. Stuart would have gleaned little from any explanation she might offer.

Sir Stephen Penrhyn did not propose immediately. He had a sister; a sister much his senior, and who, both before and since his father's death, had governed the whole family with unlimited sway. She had been married to a Sir Patrick Macfarren, and was now a widow. Sir Stephen went to Scotland to break to her the important fact of his intentions. He had, as we have seen, considerable doubts of the success of his suit with Eleanor; but it appears that he did not think it necessary to mention those doubts to Lady Macfarren; to whom, on the contrary, he narrated the entertaining fable, that he had made the conquest of a most beautiful young heiress, who passionately returned his regard, but that he had suspended his declaration in form to her friends, till he had paid the respect due to his sole-surviving relative, of informing her of the fact. And Lady Macfarren gruffly hoped he had not been "taken in," and said she thought there was little need to have gone hunting for a wife in the English counties, when he might have had "just the pick and choose" of the noblest-born ladies in Scotland; and being pressed by her brother to come to town in furtherance of this matter, she stated it to be her opinion that it was just as easy for "other folk" to come to Edinburgh, as for her to go to London, and that therefore he might hold his wedding in that modern Athens, or perform the ceremony without its being blessed by the light of her countenance; with which instructions Sir Stephen returned to his lodgings in Grosvenor-street, and mused upon them, riding in the dusty and empty Park.

Finally, he resolved to postpone sending the letter he had concocted for the perusal of the omnipotent guardian, till Lady Margaret should return to town, on her way to Lanark's Lodge, when he would consult her as to its contents. This involved the patience of a very few days longer. He thought Lady Margaret not unfavorable to his love; and he had that vague sort of conviction of her influence over every one, that he felt as if she could smooth every difficulty that might arise, either with mother, guardian, or the young lady herself.

And, indeed, Lady Margaret saw no reason why Sir Stephen should not be Miss Raymond's husband. She thought the sooner Eleanor was married the better. Her position was a strange one. All the fragmentary elements of protection which surrounded her, consisting of an invalid mother, scolding half-brother, and romantic guardian, could not and did not, in Margaret's opinion, make up the stable, happy home, which renders it indifferent whether a girl settles early in life or not. The lovely chaperon did not see how, now that Eleanor was a woman instead of a child, that anomalous household could hold together; how, especially after Godfrey should again go to sea, Eleanor was to continue living with this handsome, attractive man who was no relation to her family, and whose age and appearance so ill-assorted with the original "Guardy" of old comedies, whose title Lieutenant Marsden had so wrathfully objected to his acquiring.

Nor was that, "on the contrary," with which Sir Stephen's anxieties had been pacified the day he made his adieu, at all an exaggeration. Margaret always spoke the simple, honest truth. She never departed from it, for her own sake, or the sake of others. It was the simple truth, then, that Eleanor's manner had rather more welcome in it for Sir Stephen than for others. Eleanor disliked him, because he had beat her dog; that beloved favorite which had been presented to her by her beloved guardian. But in her heart she thought herself very unjust to entertain so strong an aversion to a gentleman who had, after all, only beat a dog that attacked his own; and who had been so very kind about it afterward, bringing a particular ointment for Ruellach's foot, and dressing it himself for the few days it continued sore and inflamed, and, long after it was well, persisting in calling (to see how the animal prospered); therefore Miss Raymond made an effort with herself, and smiled shy smiles now and then at Sir Stephen, to show she was not utterly implacable; and patted his rough terrier with a friendly and pardoning hand, as the involuntary and innocent cause of Ruellach's tribulation and wounds.

And, though this may be held to be small encouragement to a lover, such things are matters of comparison; and Eleanor gave no encouragement whatever to any one else. Not even to Lord Edgar Oswald Beauregard, second son of the Duke of Beauregard, the most exquisite dandy of his day, who sang, rode, and danced, and had such a profile as never was seen, except in the Vatican, chipped and chiseled in ancient marble. Not even, I repeat, to Lord Edgar, who, though he mentioned it to no one, had a far more sincere conviction than Sir Stephen that he had only to propose, to be welcomed with transport by the young heiress and all her relations and friends, whosoever and wheresoever they might be. But Lord Edgar did not propose just at present, because another young lady came out that same season who had ten thousand a year, and Eleanor had only five, and he naturally waited to see whether he had any chance with the ten, before he dropped to the five. At present the odds were twenty to one in favor of the ten thousand, who was greatly dazzled by the appearance of the beautiful dandy, and could scarcely be curbed by her prudent old father in her enthusiastic confidence, that she was beloved entirely "for herself," by this Apollo of the English aristocracy.

Sir Stephen did not feel Lord Edgar's uncertainty. Rich or poor, no one had ever struck his fancy with the same wild passion as Eleanor. If she had been a beggar-maid, he would have copied the example of King Cophetua, a monarch whose fame has, perhaps, been more extensive than the circle of his imitators.

So Sir Stephen read over daily the copy of his letter to Mr. Stuart, and scratched a word out, and put a word in (for he was not greatly addicted to letter-writing, and the composition cost him some trouble), till there it was, a clear, business-like, explanatory letter, meet for a guardian to read who was bound to see his ward disposed of to proper advantage. He explained how he had eighteen thousand a year, a place in Wales, and a place in Scotland; how he intended to stand for the county in which his Welsh property was situated, and was sure of success; and how he was connected with a marquis, a viscount, and no less than three earls, one of whom, the Earl of Peebles, being an invalid, sixty-five years old, unmarried, and without children, it was highly probable Eleanor might, in the course of years, attain the honor of being countess of that name. Together with other particulars, such as he judged might, with the prudent, indulgent, and exemplary gentleman Lady Margaret had described Mr. Stuart to be, weigh in a suitor's behalf, and cause a favorable decision of his claims.

As to Eleanor, he refused to doubt his power of pleasing her, even while his mind misgave him. He had never been in love before, and failed to win. To be sure, his previous fancies had been in a very different line; but he reflected that it was no use "shilly-shallying:" a fellow would never take a dangerous leap out hunting, if he sate on his horse craning and looking over his neck at it. He would propose. "Faint heart never won fair lady" (which was one of the very few quotations Sir Stephen knew) and so he read his letter once more, and copied it out for the last time, previous to submitting it for Lady Margaret's approval.

CHAPTER XV.

GODFREY EXAMINES THE CONSCIENCES OF OTHERS.

Lady Margaret was still at Aspendale, cheering David, coaxing Eleanor, amusing Lady Raymond, and battling with Godfrey's prejudices. His last trouble was that Euphemia did not go to church twice on Sundays. It was most improper that the child should be brought up to consider her Sunday duties over, when the morning service was concluded and she came home to her roast fowl and bread pudding. He wondered that Lady Margaret, with her excellent principles, did not see this.

"Euphemia is not very strong, and I doubt whether any child can really force its attention through two long services such as our Church appoints," said Margaret, quietly.

"It is sufficient that the Church has appointed them. A child ought to be compelled to attend,

and corrected if it is inattentive; that would be my system."

"It is not mine; and I should hope my poor child's evening prayers are not the less acceptable to a merciful Creator because she has not sat half asleep through a long sermon in the afternoon."

"It is most pernicious to teach her that she may judge how much, or how little, she is to accept of the forms of her Church; that she may do as she likes about prayer. I must confess I was somewhat astonished when I saw you both this evening sitting in the church porch, knowing that Euphemia had not attended service."

"But have we no right to sit in the porch unless she attends afternoon service?" said Lady Margaret, laughing. "We sat there to enjoy the sweet evening, Euphemia being tired. The clusters of the traveler's joy and Virginia creeper, reminded us of the cemetery at Frankfort, and we were speaking of the beautiful inscription over the gate of that burial-ground—'God's Rest.' God's evening rest, when the toil of life's day is over! Our talk was very innocent and unworldly, I assure you."

"Of course; no doubt, Lady Margaret; but she might have rested somewhere else. Not to attend church, and then to saunter past and sit down at the door!"

"My dear Mr. Marsden, I should have been glad, instead of sitting down at the door, to have gone in with the child, and prayed in the church, but for the English custom of locking out prayers till next market-day is over, and the Sabbath come round again. But I repeat that I consider two services a day too much for Euphemia. Do you think she could learn nothing in the church porch? It is a solemn place. It is impossible to sit there, and not think of those who have passed through for many generations—the pious, the careless, the chance visitor, and the villager, who perhaps never heard prayers except in that one church; living and dying without ever straying from his native place! the very stones are worn away by the pacing of the feet of those whose prayers in this world are over. What congregations have poured silently out of the narrow entry, each bearing his own impression of the hour; none knowing what passed in the heart of his neighbor; none saying, 'Brother, what smote you?' and yet we know that at some time words spoken within have consoled the grieving, rebuked the sinful, converted the skeptic, or awakened the worldling. And the preacher has gone out last—not knowing whether God has called, by the instrumentality of his weak voice, one soul nearer heaven than on the preceeding Sabbath. A church porch on a summer's evening, is a sermon in itself."

"Sermons in stones, and good in every thing," said David Stuart, with a smile.

He looked at Lady Margaret with such affectionate admiration, that Eleanor's heart fluttered. Perhaps she was a little influenced by it in the observation she made:

"I think Godfrey is right, though, in saying we should beware of judging how much we will accept of forms. I think we stand on dangerous ground when we attempt to choose for ourselves out of appointed ceremonies. Like flowers and weak trees, we are the better of being trained, even against our natural bent. I think that is right, though Godfrey always expresses himself harshly."

"And I think you are right, though you always express yourself affectedly," said her half-brother, with something of a sneer.

The fallible David was provoked at his tone; perhaps a little provoked, also, at the moderate upholding Eleanor had given to the excellent Pharisee; and above all he was provoked at his interference with Lady Margaret.

He, too, had seen her sitting in the church porch; talking with radiant, serious eyes, to her little girl, and had passed on, unwilling to break in upon her discourse. He thought Godfrey's lecture insolent and absurd, whatever truths it might involve.

"We are not disputing the value of forms," said he; "though 'tis certain that I have seen fiercer hatred, more grasping avarice, more worldly ambition, more selfish luxury, and more sneering at the misfortunes of neighbors, among professed religionists, and twice-a-day churchgoers, than in any other set or section of society. It is well the days of burning and racking are gone by, or some of us would stand an excellent chance of torture, on the judgment of men every way our inferiors both in the theory and practice of religious duty."

"I do not know in what I am your inferior," said Godfrey, catching at the words, "unless it be in what I believe is termed in your country the 'gift of the gab'—stringing long sentences together. A man can see what he ought to do, and do it, without being inordinately clever or book-learned. Right is right, and wrong is wrong; church is church, and prayers are prayers. We are here to attend them, not to settle whether they are too long or not."

"I spoke generally, and not with a personal application to yourself," said David, haughtily; "but if I must make a remark of that sort, I should say that whatever is right or wrong, your attempting to teach Lady Margaret how to bring up her own child is presumptuous and ridiculous. Men of your stamp live under a singular delusion. Having made, or thinking you have made, your own peace with God, does not give you a right to disturb the peace of every one with whom you are sufficiently familiar to discuss these topics. Your own convictions, late or early, do not transform you suddenly into a sort of John the Baptist, a wandering preacher, calling on others to repent. Every one must abide by their own heart; you are not their self-appointed judge. One man can kneel and fast; another is too weary to kneel, too weak to fast. There must be a certain latitude and discretion, unless we were all cast in the same mould, body and soul."

"You are good enough to lecture men of my stamp," said Godfrey, with excessive anger. "Now, give me leave to tell you, that men of *your* stamp, are men with indian-rubber consciences; men who stretch what they ought to do, to the length of what they want to do; men who find an excuse for themselves at all times, under all circumstances; men who can commit great sins, and forgive themselves so easily, that you would think they had done nothing at all; men to whom the fact of a temptation is

sufficient apology for a crime—who won't stop at the beginning, and can't face the end—"

"Godfrey!" said Eleanor, in a voice choking with emotion.

But David Stuart walked slowly up to young Marsden, and laid his hand gently on his shoulder, as an elder brother might have done. He was deadly pale: he spoke in a faint altered tone. Lady Margaret and Eleanor looked at him with surprise.

"Godfrey," said he "you are right; you are a better man than I am. I am unfit to guide or lecture any one; and I ask your pardon for the expression, 'men of your stamp.' They *are* better than men of mine. Nevertheless, for your own sake, and the sake of those you love, strive for tolerance!"

After a pause, he added, hurriedly: "Let us have no more discussion: let us go out. Eleanor will you come out? The room is suffocating: the air here is like the air before an earthquake. Lady Margaret, do you remember the earthquake at Palermo? how the ceilings cracked, and came down, and we thought the whole house would follow? This reminds me of it."

Lady Margaret said she thought it was a very sultry day; and she added, rather timidly, she thought Mr. Stuart must be ill.

It was very seldom that Lady Margaret looked grave or mournful; but the tender beauty of her face at that moment, struck Eleanor.

"Oh!" thought the poor girl, "it is impossible that any one should be preferred to her. It is impossible he should think of me, while she is here. I wish she would go; I wish I had never seen her."

It was by Eleanor's side, nevertheless, that David Stuart ranged himself, as the party left the house for their walk.

"*You* are tolerant, my Eleanor," said he, sadly, and as if the conversation had never been interrupted; "you are tolerant and generous. I believe there is nothing you could not forgive."

"What have I to forgive? What ails you?" said Eleanor, in a gentle, pleading voice; but he did not reply.

"David Stuart has something heavy on his conscience," said Godfrey sternly, as his wife passed her arm through his.

"Has he, dear?" said Emma, and she gave a little gulping sob; for nothing frightened Emma like a scene of any sort; she never understood what was the cause of dispute, or why people were so angry; but she comprehended that there was what schoolboys call "a row," trembled while it lasted, felt relieved when it was over, and if Godfrey spoke very loud, or with unusual bitterness, generally cried, as infants do when grown people quarrel before them.

"He has something on his conscience," thought Godfrey; and, occupied with that thought, he did not talk at all to his wife during their moody walk, nor did she attempt to win him from his silence. She walked on, looking over the cornfields, full of blue flowers and red poppies, and wishing she had her baby boy with her; but she had been afraid to ask Godfrey to wait till she had put on the child's straw hat, because, when *he was thinking* of other men's consciences, he *was apt to be rough and violent* in his replies.

A heavy thunder-storm drove the whole party home again after a short interval. Eleanor lingered in her mother's dressing-room. When she came down, Lady Margaret had taken out her work: Godfrey was ruling the track of the 'Thetis,' across the Pacific: Emma was fitting his pen in a small pair of compasses: David Stuart was watching the rain from the window. They seemed a very silent party. Eleanor glanced at David—hesitated—and sat down by Lady Margaret. The latter looked up and smiled archly.

"I have had a letter by this evening's post," said she, "from Sir Stephen Penrhyn; he wants to submit to me a certain epistle which is coming here. I dare say, Mr. Stuart, in all the long letters Eleanor wrote to you, she never told you the adventure poor Ruellach had on Wimbledon Common?"

"Yes, she told me a gentleman had beaten Ruellach; it was some time ago."

"And has she never mentioned the gentleman since?"

"Why should I mention him?" said Eleanor, rather indignantly.

"Well now," said Lady Margaret playfully, "I think myself a very ill-used chaperon. I take a young lady to town, and to all the smart balls and parties. In our very first day's fishing we spear a salmon; that is in our very first season we catch Sir Stephen Penrhyn—a very rich and puissant seigneur—and no credit is given to me, and Eleanor asks why she should mention him! Mr. Stuart, I give you fair notice to expect a proposal any morning, in the middle of your breakfast; your consent in form, lawyer's parchments, settlements, my invitation to the wedding—all that is in immediate perspective. If Eleanor won't marry him, then, in the distant perspective, we have another season in town, and my duties as chaperon recommence next spring."

Eleanor lifted her eyes with a half blush and smile to her guardian's face; its expression startled her. Pale, haggard, and scrutinizing, his gaze was fixed upon her as if he would read her very soul. With a rapid furtive glance she scanned the rest of the party; Margaret's head was bent over her work with a pretty mischievous smile; Godfrey was still ruling the ship's track; and Emma was watching him. Eleanor breathed more freely: she was unobserved: she clasped her hands with a look of deprecating affection: never did dumb expression say so well, "be comforted, it is *you* whom I love!" Margaret raised her eyes at the same moment; David made an effort to speak.

"Eleanor is very young," said he.

The words stuck in his throat; he looked wistfully at Lady Margaret; came forward to the table; opened a book; shut it; took up the scissors which lay by Margaret's work; attempted to speak again; turned ghastly pale; and almost immediately left the room. One of Margaret's sudden blushes suffused her brow, cheek, and neck. She looked at Eleanor, but Eleanor's eyes were fixed on the handle of the door which her guardian had just closed. Was it possible that David Stuart was himself in love with Eleanor?

Like the shock given by the torpedo, the same thought thrilled at once through all the

little circle. Margaret somehow thought it the most unlikely thing in the world; and yet what else could she suppose, after the scene she had witnessed? To Godfrey, who had looked sternly at the pale, gazing man as he stood at the table, it was

"Confirmation strong,
As proofs of Holy writ;"

and his anger rose like the waves in a storm, at this crowning offense of his half-sister's guardian. Even common-place Emma seemed struck by some sudden revelation; even to her, it appeared, "that Mr. Stuart did not at all like the thoughts of Eleanor's marrying."

But for Eleanor herself who shall tell the feelings that fluttered in her heart? She answered Godfrey's flashing glance with a smile almost of triumph, and moved to the window where David had been standing. She flung it open, and stood looking on the roses sparkling with rain, and the tall gleaming lilies, splendid in their freshened beauty. The chorus of birds, so joyous, so multitudinous after a thunder-storm, sounded in her ear; the drops hung like jewels on the leaves; the scent of heliotrope and geranium met the breeze, already loaded with the perfume of distant clover-fields. It blew softly over her cheek and hair, like the lady in Shelley's Sensitive Plant—

"You might see that the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there, and left passion behind."

She trembled with the very certainty of her joy; for now she *knew* he loved her. Before this hour she had hoped it, but now she knew it; now she was sure of it; now it was clear as the glorious sun, whose warmth was drinking up the vanishing drops from the smooth lawn before her. And deeply must he love her, so to lose all self-command when her marriage with another was mentioned. But not more deeply than she loved him: that was impossible! That he should love her as well, was all she asked of Heaven.

Two days after this little scene, Lady Margaret's visit ended, and she went away. She bade Eleanor farewell with tender seriousness.

"God bless you, dear child, and make you happy, whatever is decided for your future," was all she said.

She had never alluded to what had passed; no one had spoken of it, at least not to Eleanor. And Miss Raymond embraced her chaperon with more frank affection in that parting hour, than all her grace, kindness, and charm, had been able to inspire, while the doubt of a possible rivalry remained.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

Though Godfrey had said nothing to Eleanor, he had said a great deal to his mother; so much indeed, that Sir Stephen Penrhyn himself could scarcely be more anxious for his marriage than Lady Raymond. She really began to take the same view as Godfrey, of the heinousness of her late husband's secretary aspiring to marry her beautiful heiress; and in her maternal solicitude for her daughter, and weak submission to her son, to adopt his notions that the whole residence at Aspendale, while Eleanor had been as yet only a child, the refusal to intrust her education to any other hands but his own, the pains he had taken with her, were so many portions of a deep-laid plot to obtain an influence over her affections, which no one should be able to uproot. She blamed herself for having invited his stay in the first instance. She entreated Godfrey to consider what should be done, and whether it was likely Mr. Stuart would venture to declare himself. Godfrey thought not; he thought he would wait till Eleanor was of age, finding pretexts in the mean while for not bestowing her hand on any suitor.

Lady Raymond was rather sorry Lord Edgar did not propose: she would have much liked a duke's son for her son-in-law. She wished it were possible to wait, to see whether Eleanor might not make some very splendid match. But Sir Stephen was a million times preferable to the chance of her becoming Mrs. David Stuart. Poor child! she must be bewitched to desire such a thing. Perhaps she did not desire it: perhaps all this time Godfrey was mistaken as to the thoughts that were passing in his sister's mind, when she smiled as she passed him, crossing to the window, the day of the thunder-storm. She might be thinking of Sir Stephen. Lady Margaret had persisted that what little encouragement Eleanor seemed capable of giving to any one, was certainly bestowed on him. Lady Margaret said *she* did not think him handsome, but most people did. He had a very fine figure, and rode particularly well, which was all she had observed.

Altogether the doubt of Eleanor's sentiments were so great, that Lady Raymond thought it more prudent to leave her daughter unquestioned. She contented herself with giving Godfrey plenipotentiary powers to speak to Mr. Stuart on the subject of Sir Stephen's attachment, and to make him understand that Miss Raymond's family approved of it, and desired to see her married.

David Stuart heard all with stony gravity. He then said that he agreed with Godfrey, that in Eleanor's position the sooner she was married the better, and that he would do any thing, short of forcing her inclinations, to bring about the desired event. Godfrey left him with a positive abhorrence of the profound hypocrisy and self-command which had succeeded his evident grief, alarm, and agitation, when this marriage was first mentioned.

At length Sir Stephen's letter came. The morning it arrived, Mr. Stuart sent in word that he was too unwell to breakfast with the family, but when Miss Raymond had breakfasted, he wished her to come and speak with him in the library. Eleanor obeyed the summons—she was pale, but resolved. She felt too certain of his attachment, and his consequent struggles, to entertain a fear, natural under the circumstances, that he would think her forward for granting a love that as yet had never been sued for. Perhaps now he meant to tell her he loved her, and adjure her not to bestow her hand on another. That would be a far easier conclusion, than the confused notion of giving him to understand that she would not marry another, because she preferred himself. She

hoped it would be so. It would spare her much.

When she entered the library, she saw at a glance how ghastly pale and ill her guardian looked. But that did not startle or disturb her; she had expected it. She expected to see him look as he did the day of the storm. He said, in a low, calm tone, that he supposed she knew why he had sent for her; and she said firmly that she guessed it was to hear of Sir Stephen Penrhyn's proposals. He read the letter which had cost Sir Stephen so much pains and perplexity, and paused. He then pointed out the advantages of the marriage, and the wish Lady Raymond had expressed of seeing her daughter settled. Eleanor trembled. Like many persons in great agitation, she tried to assume a playfulness of manner.

"I must refuse him, Guardy, nevertheless," said she. There was a Shakspeare lying on the table, she drew it toward her: "I must refuse him like Olivia, and for Olivia's reasons: I have heard you read them very often."

David remembered the lines; they floated mechanically through his brain, as his haggard eyes rested on the graceful hand that touched the book:

"Your lord does know my mind; I can not love him!
Yet I suppose him virtuous; know him noble;
Of great estate; of fresh and stainless youth;
In voices well divulged; free, learned, and valiant:
And in dimensions and the shape of nature,
A gracious person—but yet *I* can not love him—
He might have took his answer long ago."

David sighed heavily.

"You do not wish to marry this man, Eleanor?"

"I can not love him. I could not love him even if—"

"If what?"

"If I had seen no one that I preferred," said Eleanor, with desperate courage. Courage that was needed; for this time her guardian positively started. He struggled, however, for composure.

"You love some one else?" said he; and Eleanor waited, her head feeling dizzy and her hands cold, for the next question—who she loved. But David did not ask who. He breathed hard, and closed his eyes for an instant, struggling with some inward agony. Then he spoke, in much the same voice as before.

"Is he rich?"

The question was unexpected, but Eleanor tried to turn it to account in the way of explanation. She answered in a low, nervous tone,

"No; he has no more than my father bequeathed to you."

All calmness of manner forsook her guardian.

"Eleanor," said he, wildly. "Do not speak to me of your father; speak of what is before us; this man—this marriage—this letter; you can not marry a poor man; it is my duty—it is your mother's wish—I sent for you to say—" here he suddenly paused, and flinging his arms forward on the table, he laid his head on them and groaned aloud. Eleanor rose from her seat, and crept to his side, trembling in every limb.

"I love another," said she, "with my whole heart and soul. That being so, you can not *expect me to marry* Sir Stephen Penrhyn. I have no desire to be richer than I am; I am rich enough for both."

"Is it Lord Edgar?"

"No, oh! no. How can you think me capable of such a miserable choice? I that have been your companion so long!"

"Then name him, Eleanor; have compassion on me, lest I go mad—lest I go mad before I know what is to become of you, unhappy child! I only ask you to name him—I can then advise—we shall know what is possible—Eleanor, my little Nell, name him!"

He drew her toward him, with a forced and painful smile, which vainly contrasted with the haggard anxiety of his eyes; he spoke as he used to speak to her when she was a little child; he smoothed her hair as he did in those days, caressingly. There was something strange, something terrible in his manner; its forced gentleness and patience; its smothered wildness and pain. Eleanor stared helplessly in his face; she yielded to the force of his trembling grasp, and bowed forward. Her hand leaned for support on his shoulder; she bent, till her checked and uneven respiration came warm on his bloodless cheek. She strove to speak, but found no utterance.

"Whisper it, Eleanor," said he; and he turned his head away, as if to make it easier to the embarrassed girl to make her confession. Still with the manner he had to her in years gone by. And Eleanor tried to obey, but no sound came; no sound but the pendulum of the clock, and the loud strong beating of that man's agitated heart, as he listened and waited for her words. She heard that: it seemed to strike on her very soul, with a vibrating strength; her own strength failed, and she fainted.

With fierce despair and self-reproach, David Stuart saw the dark lashes sink down over those lovely eyes. He lifted her and laid her on the sofa, and was lingering in momentary doubt whether to wait her recovery or ring for her maid, when the library-door opened, and Lady Raymond entered.

With a start and a shriek she advanced to Eleanor, followed hurriedly by Godfrey.

"Good Heavens, what is the matter? What have you done to my child, my Eleanor? Are you fit to be my child's guardian? What is to become of us? my Eleanor!"

"Miss Raymond fainted during the discussion of that letter," said David, tossing Sir Stephen's carefully worded epistle across the table to Godfrey, who stood sternly lowering at him.

"Whatever ails my sister, it is very obvious she would be better under female care. She did not faint when Lady Margaret discussed this marriage with her."

The haughty contempt of Godfrey's manner was lost on David Stuart. He was watching Eleanor, who had re-opened her eyes. She smiled vaguely, and put out her hand to him; he kissed that blanched hand. The whole world might have stood by and cursed him aloud; he heard nothing, saw nothing but that pale girl, his poor Eleanor (his, more than he knew or could guess, choked as that unuttered confession had been); lying there in the library, where they had first met; where the fragile child who was now a passionate woman, had crept gently in to ask him of her father's death. Her father—his

friend—his benefactor—who trusted him with his child's destiny! What would her destiny be? Whom did she love—whom did she love?

He was conscious of reproaches addressed to him by Lady Raymond, while he stood lost in thought. Of some gentle pleading from Eleanor to her mother: but what, he knew not. Of Eleanor being led away to her own room, persisting that she felt well again, and of Godfrey's remaining and talking to him fiercely and scornfully of the necessity of his guardianship being put on a more formal footing, and of Eleanor's marriage. But in all this nothing distinct; nothing that he could answer; he was like a man struggling with nightmare.

At length he was conscious that he was left alone. It was a relief; he dropped into a chair, and again buried his face in his hands. When he looked up, the last glimmer of sunset was fading out of the autumnal sky. He rang for lights, and wrote for some time. Then he sent for his own servant.

"Sandy," said he, "here are some papers Miss Raymond will have to read in the morning; as soon as she is dressed, give them to her. I think I shall be obliged to go to London by the early mail. You need not wait up for me. I will walk across the park."

Eleanor saw David Stuart that night. She was sitting at the open window feverish and sleepless. He had come round by the terrace, and was standing with his arms folded, looking up as it seemed to her room. Some lines recurred to her, which she had heard Lady Margaret sing; the altered version of a most passionate little poem, which could scarcely be sung as it was written, and the original of which is perhaps unknown to half those who sing it:

> "I arise from dreams of thee,
> And a spirit in my feet
> Has led me—who knows how?
> To thy chamber-window, Sweet!"

She murmured the words to herself restlessly. She longed to go down into the still garden, over the dewy grass; and there, in the dim moonlight, tell him what she had failed in saying that day.

But he would think it so strange! She was in her dressing-gown; it was impossible she could go down so; and she must pass her mother's room, who slept very lightly, and was very nervous. So she remained; watching David Stuart, as he stood looking paler than ever, in the light of the cold white moon.

Presently he moved; he stretched his arms toward her; and for one startled instant, she thought he perceived her watching him. But that could not be; for he let his arms fall with a weary desponding gesture, and passed round where the shadow of the corner of the house fell dark across the lawn, and then she saw him no more.

Early, very early in the morning, Eleanor dressed. She had not slept; she could not sleep; she waited restlessly for daylight, for the usual hours, when the loneliness of night would be over, with its troubled watchings, vague resolutions, and weary thoughts; and she could go to the library and see her guardian. Eleanor thought at last she had hit upon a very easy way of telling him her difficult secret. She could not say, "I love *you*;" she felt more than ever, since yesterday, that that was impossible; but she would say that she wondered at his supposing she could have formed any attachment out of the home-circle round her—that she never wished to see it changed. Then he must guess, after what she said yesterday, that he himself was the only person she thought of marrying.

After all, it was only one hour of pain and embarrassment, with a life of serene happiness lying beyond. That life was only just beginning, and she laid down its hopes at his feet; to shape the future as he pleased; to govern it as he had governed the past; only not to leave her; not to give her away to some enamored stranger, who had made her acquaintance the other day at a ball or party; who was not the friend and companion of years; of whom she knew nothing; with whom she never could be happy; in whose home she must dwell like a caged bird pining to fly back to its nest in the wild wood; pining to return to Aspendale!

She could not live any where, but at Aspendale; nor with any one, but David Stuart. So Eleanor passed slowly along the corridor, and down the broad oaken staircase, pausing at every step, on her way to the library to offer up her life and hopes at the shrine of the unconscious idol. Only with a feeling of compassion which idols do not inspire (for she could not but recall the obvious anguish he had suffered the day before), and which he had taken so much pains to quell. When she made her final halt at the crimson cloth door, whose opening was to usher her into that loved yet dreaded presence, she smiled to think how often, when a child, she had paused at that very landing, with her slate and copy-book in her hand; conscious of a half-learnt lesson, or guilty of some monstrous blot on the hastily-written exercise.

The recollection encouraged her; and with the smile yet lingering on her lips, she pushed open the heavy door, and entered. Her guardian was not in the library; he must have quitted it lately, for the wax taper on his writing-table was still alight, burned down to the socket; and his papers scattered about.

Eleanor rang the bell, that she might send him word she was there. That was better than seeking him in the breakfast-room, where perhaps Emma and Godfrey were already established. When she had rung the bell, she moved toward the writing-table to put out the light. Something strange in the aspect of the room, suddenly struck Eleanor: some inexplicable evidence that it had not been arranged since the preceding day. Her glove was lying on the chair, where she had sate during part of the conversation before she fainted; the chair was exactly in the same position; the volume of Shakspeare had not been moved, which she had drawn toward her in her embarrassed effort at a playful comparison between herself and Olivia. There had been a fire in the grate, even on the warm evening preceding; it had burnt out, and was full of the light floating ashes of consumed paper, which stirred in the draught of the chimney as Eleanor approached.

"Sandy," said she, as the servant entered, "where is Mr. Stuart? why is the library not ready this morning? what is the matter?" for Eleanor felt already that something was the matter.

Mr. Stuart was gone to town; he had spoke

of it the night before; and the housekeeper thought it a good opportunity to have the library thoroughly swept, and arranged, which the housemaid had not yet begun to do.

Mr. Stuart had left a packet for Miss Raymond to read through, against he came back. Eleanor breathed more freely; it was something connected with her proposed marriage; at least he had written to explain his sudden journey; perhaps Godfrey and he had talked matters over, after she had gone to her own room the previous day. She had not seen any of them after that. Her mother had wished her to keep very quiet, and not even to come down to dinner. She did not know what had passed during the remainder of the day; she was to learn it now. She sate down, as Sandy closed the library door, and opened the packet: it contained law papers, letters, and a letter from her guardian.

Ah! perhaps—perhaps he had taken courage to own in writing, though not in speaking, how hard his fate would seem if she forsook him; how dearly he loved her; how miserable he had been since Sir Stephen's letter came; how unhappy, struggling against his attachment for months before! Perhaps, on the other hand, Godfrey had spoken harshly, and they had quarreled, and her guardian would not come back till she had decided as to her marriage; and Eleanor's indignation rose against Godfrey.

She held the unsealed paper in her hand for a minute or two, doubting, and considering thus; as we have all of us done, when the letter we hold would at once resolve all doubts into certainty. Then she glanced over the hurried, agitated scrawl, wondering; and then she read the first two lines. It was long before Eleanor could read further, so sudden and terrible was the horror which froze her heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRUST BETRAYED.

"ELEANOR," the letter began, "when this reaches you, a censure upon my memory is all that will be possible to human judgment. Begin then by pardoning me. The greatest criminal can only pay for his crime with the forfeit of his life. All may be told in two words: you are a beggar, and I am infamous! Your father left me to guard your fortune; I have risked it, I have lost it; your mother has nothing, you have nothing, all is gone! If bearing a life of infamy could serve you or retrieve your injuries, I would live and face the future; but there is no hope—no hope.

I wish to write collectedly; but I have felt since this morning, like one who walks in a dream. The post which brought the letter I sent for you to read, brought to me also a letter; brought the desperate confirmation of impending fears, which, though lifted away by faint hopes at intervals, have embittered the last two years. Life was agony even while hope lasted. Now hope is gone, life would be hell. I go where reproaches can not reach me. Your mother has reproached me—your brother—without knowing how little or how much I deserved all the bitter words they uttered. They imagine—but why *should I* cloud your innocent spirit with their imaginings? It is enough that of that of which they thought me guilty, I am innocent; but guilty of crime, blacker in dye a thousand times than any they have fancied. Return to Lady Raymond your father's last letter. Godfrey Marsden brought it to me and desired I would read it over. Tell him it had the effect he intended. Tell him it stabbed me to the heart, though I needed no further wound. I do not know that I could have lived, even if I had not read it. But I know I can not live with its words glaring before me. Oh, Eleanor! they are written in words of fire on the surrounding air! The memory of his love and trust in me, accursed that I am, is my sentence of execution!"

The letter was broken off and resumed in more regular and less hurried writing:

"I have been very incoherent: it is necessary you should know all, as briefly as I can tell it. When Mr. Christison died, and Dunleath was for sale, you may remember that I went to Scotland. I had a hope then, with the money your father bequeathed to me, to purchase the house there; leaving the shooting land for sale. By some strange, some evil chance, at this very time a bank in India connected with one of the great firms in Edinburgh, suspended payment. You would not understand if I were to attempt to explain the business in which I then engaged. It is sufficient to say, that the loan of an enormous sum only for the time necessary to communicate with the Indian firm, would save both banks from breaking; while the rate of interest for this all important loan would at once put me in possession of a sum more than sufficient to realize the dream of my life, the repurchasing Dunleath. Eleanor, why say to you now, that I had sore struggles with myself? Why plead, that mercantile men of sound and sane views thought it a safe speculation; that lawyers and men of business combined in the decision that I risked nothing in lending the money.

I made the loan, and the two houses in Edinburgh and Calcutta redeemed their credit, and stood firm. But there was some uneasiness from the accounts given of the folly, or worse than folly, of one of the partners in the Indian house. I suffered anxiety from day to day, from hour to hour. My first punishment (how heavy it seemed then—how trivial now) arose from the fact of Mrs. Christison changing her mind about the sale of Dunleath. Her daughter resisted the sale, and she yielded. They were obstinate; I found I had put all in jeopardy for no tangible end. The anguish of uncertainty, the terror I endured, who shall comprehend? When I returned from Edinburgh to you, I seemed to bring with me a shadowy fiend who wandered forever at my side, whispering 'If all should be lost!'

"All *was* lost!

"When Lady Margaret arrived at Aspendale, a gleam of sunshine crossed my path. She brought with her, documents which had been forwarded to my agent in town, showing that the loan and interest would be remitted in all probability within the next two months. I breathed again. I felt more happy. Dunleath and the past seemed nothing: the future was all: I lived for the hour when I should be able to know all was as before. That hour never came! Delays, uncertainties, complicated embarassments, the failure of another house at Cal-

cutta connected with the same firm, the rascality of one of the Indian partners, and the imprudence of others, combined to throw affairs into confusion again.

"One of the partners arrived at Marseilles. He refused to come to England. I went to meet him. His statements filled me with gloomy fear, though he himself seemed sanguine; and earnestly besought me to trust his judgment, and empower him to act for me with the Indian firm. At length the crash came. Both houses stopped simultaneously. One of the partners shot himself; one went to America; and out of the wreck of millions nothing is recoverable! The news reached me yesterday. I received at the same time, Sir Stephen's proposals for your hand.

"When first that matter was adverted to by Lady Margaret, while affairs were yet in a condition which it was possible to retrieve, I confess I hoped that you would refuse this man; that you did not love him; that time might yet be granted me, before the inevitable exposure of the steps I had taken with respect to your fortune. I thought, if I could delay this or any other marriage, it would be well; but in the horror of yesterday's news, the one gleam of light, the straw at which my drowning soul caught, was that you might love him, and that your marriage with one so wealthy might spare you the change I had brought upon you, and my disgrace be all your pain. You did not love him—you loved another; all was lost!

"Oh! Eleanor, when they speak of me, as they will, as they must speak of me; when all curse me with just contempt, set against my crime years of remembrance. They will tell you I lied, when I said that I loved you tenderly from your childhood; that I prayed to God to do my duty by you; but it was true, Eleanor—it was true!" . . . . . .

The letter was again broken off, and the remainder was so blotted as to be scarcely legible.

"I have been out to look my farewell at your window. Oh! how still and calm is this sultry night. You are wrapt in a holy and quiet sleep, in the keeping of God's good angels. You have prayed; prayed it may be, for me. I can neither sleep nor pray." . . . . . .

'Whom do you love, my Eleanor? I shall never know; but if he is poor, I have cursed his happiness and yours. Oh, think well, if this is but some girlish fancy! The interval was so brief for you to fix your whole affections! If this is only a wandering dream, try to receive Sir Stephen's proposals with welcome. Love, at your age, is an illusion oftener than a reality. You may live to smile at the notion of the love you now entertain." . . . . . .

"But what am I, that I should advise you? It is I who have chained and crippled your life: it is I who make choice difficult; happiness perhaps impossible! Where are the days when I thought to serve and aid you? I have destroyed you—I have destroyed myself—I have defrauded the widow and the orphan!" . . . . .

"Wandering like a demon-spirit, seeking rest and finding none! If the night air was natural, it would have cooled my brain; but Heaven is against me. I can not breathe; the sultriness is dreadful; your window is still open. Oh, lovely, gentle child, let my miserable farewell reach you in your placid slumbers only as the air of heaven. Try to believe me! by the happiness of the past—by the anguish of the present—by my sin and my despair—I took up the charge your father left me, as a sacred task. My life was dedicated to it. If I had thought of myself, I should have left you for India or Scotland. I thought of *you!* Who will believe me? One hour's temptation blotted out years of endeavor, and vows for a lifetime! Their reproaches ring in my ears: their reproaches, untrue and yet just. The voice of the dead joins with them in bitter upbraiding. Even you, it may be—even you—on whose mercy I count (what right have I to count upon it)? even you, if you love, may upbraid me. You can not wed him you love, because he is poor, and I have beggared you! . . . . . .

"It seems as if I could have died with less pain, feeling certain of your pardon. But that may not be. Oh! if I could tear my heart out, and die so—I would do it. I leave your home—I leave the pistols I had loaded—I will not pollute the house with my blood. Silent as my shame, death shall close over me. There, where we have often sate together—there, where you promised to bear with me—I will die. Let the gray moss-covered stones by the Linn seem to you as the tomb of a miserable friend. If you can curb your heart to accept this wealthy man who loves you so entirely, do. Marry, and leave Aspendale; and if by God's mercy you are happy, come some day to the Linn—some day of peace and sunshine, like those we have known there—and breath a forgiveness for me. . . . . .

"It is darker; it is the hour before dawn; the dawn I shall never see. Oh, Eleanor, have mercy on my memory! Do not let them curse it before you—for the sake of the days when you were a child—and I was your true guardian.

"David Stuart."

What followed the reading of that letter, Eleanor herself in the after-years, could never clearly or entirely recollect. There was a search; wild confusion; exclamations of horror and blame; sounds of weeping; doors opening and shutting, or left standing open, while many persons hurried to and fro, messengers riding past the windows, the hoofs of their horses seeming to tread on Eleanor's brain; the sound of the clock, striking first one hour and then another, as it struck on usual days, when time was measured for life and not for eternity; and then—how or from whom she could never precisely recall—the confusion of horror was disentangled, and made definite and clear. Some one had ascertained the precise spot at the Linn, where the suicide must have destroyed himself. The earth was scraped, as by some one slipping or letting himself drop from the roots of a scathed tree, that projected over the black shining pool beneath the waterfall. A torn handkerchief still hung on one of the leafless branches. Its bright color, fluttering in the morning breeze on that ghastly sapless tree, told those who searched where to pause. They did not find the body; the pool went too far underground; there were those who were brave enough to dare the eddies in light, and the darkness beyond, for a little way, to try and drag the wretched man out of

the death-pool, and give him burial; but to no purpose. They all returned—and Eleanor knew that David Stuart was dead; drowned in the roaring Linn!

There were other thoughts, she knew, connected with this event. How she had now no fortune; the money her father left her being gone. How her guardian had never loved her; all his agitation and strange abstraction being the terror of an unconvicted criminal, which she had mistaken for love. How her mother and Godfrey would now, with justice, wring her heart by sitting in judgment on him who was gone. But these considerations troubled Eleanor but little as yet. She rather knew they were there, to be hereafter dwelt upon, than was conscious of a present meaning to them. The plunging horror was too recent, to admit of the outer eddies and circles of thought widening themselves on the surface of memory. One only thought beat backward and forward in her brain, like the surging billows in a sea-cave. He was dead! drowned in the roaring Linn. He was DEAD. From under the impression of that sentence, Eleanor could not move. It lay across her heart like a bar of iron; if she struggled for some other idea, it crushed her back again with its heavy monotony of anguish.

David Stuart was dead—drowned in the roaring Linn!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE news of a terrible event spreads like wildfire. Within the next four-and-twenty hours, all the neighborhood far and near, knew that Miss Raymond was penniless, and that her guardian had committed suicide. The confusion and misery at Aspendale was increased by a misfortune more especially affecting Emma. Old Mr. Fordyce had a stroke of the palsy that morning, and she went home to nurse her father.

Lady Margaret, who had got as far as Edinburgh on her way to Lanark's Lodge, returned to nurse and comfort Eleanor. Never was friendship more needed. Eleanor seemed stupefied by her grief. She wandered from room to room, sitting down when she was too weary to stand—gazing at the objects round her—starved and faint. For seven years she had taken her place by his side at meals: the attempt to eat any thing choked her. All day long she wandered thus; looking out with a sad stare on the road before the windows; that beautiful winding road, edged with chestnut and beech trees, where they had so often cantered home together; where Margaret had fed his horse from her basket of roses, the day Eleanor first felt conscious that she loved him. Looking at his books, but not opening them, for fear of seeing the well-known pencil-marks on favorite passages, made by his hand. Looking at his writing-table, where she had found the taper still burning that morning: and thinking how dreadful seemed the life of that flame, which he had lit, and which had burned long past his death-hour, through the dawn and the sunrise he never saw.

Not daring to go to her mother; Godfrey sate *with her mother; Godfrey*, whose burst of execration remained in her half-conscious memory like the loudest crash among peals of thunder heard during a fearful storm. And her poor mother wept and moaned; repeating forever one single sentence:

"Oh, if Sir John could know how his trust has been betrayed! Oh, if Sir John could know!"

All day long she wandered, alone with her grief; and when night came, she sate shuddering and still alone, thinking of that other night, of death and silence and preternatural sultriness; listening to the moan of the autumn wind; the wind that was blowing over the garden-flowers where they would walk no more; the wind that was blowing over the cold, restless waters of the roaring Linn: and seeing nothing but his visionary eyes—those eyes whose tenderness was like an unspoken blessing, whose look of displeasure had seemed to Eleanor in childhood, like that of a rebuking angel: those eyes which had closed forever, in pain, remorse, and despair!

And in the dim, mournful night she prayed for the suicide; for God's mercy upon him who had braved it by departing, uncalled, from this world of appointed trial. She prayed for him; for there are few women who in their hearts do not lean to prayers for the dead.

It was late on the fifth night that Margaret arrived. Eleanor was no great weeper, and deep grief is sometimes very stony. She was sitting mournful and unoccupied in the half-lit drawing-room, but she rose with a smothered and convulsive shriek as Margaret entered—beautiful Margaret, whom she fancied once that he loved—and advanced to meet her. Lady Margaret's eyes were swelled with excessive weeping. As they met, she again burst passionately into tears, and catching Eleanor in her arms, she kissed her head, her cheek, her hands.

"Ah!" she sobbed; "I thought I had wept till I could weep no more. My Eleanor, my poor child, this is a bitter day! But you forgive him: I am sure that you forgive him! He is gone—let us bury his faults! We must think what can be done, my poor Eleanor. Oh, who would have believed it of him? he that toiled so patiently to help his mother all his spirited boyhood; he that never owed a farthing, all his tempted youth. Oh, Eleanor, if his mother had lived to see this day! She was removed in time: there are griefs and losses that are God's special mercies, and we, blind worms that we are, will not see it. My dear, dearest child, what an opening of life for you. But I am a fool! I came here to comfort you—to think what can be done: I have left Euphemia with the duchess: I will have no thought, no care but you, till we see how things can be settled. Is every thing gone? I know nothing but the fact of his death, and your loss of fortune."

Eleanor gave Margaret her guardian's miserable letter of explanation, and she read it with tears and broken sobs, and passionate exclamations.

"There is no excusing what he did," said she; "but, oh! what he must have suffered."

Margaret's grief for David, comforted Eleanor. She did not analyze it; but it soothed her to be with some one who spoke tenderly, who did not execrate and blame him, as every one did. Every one, except poor old Mr. Fordyce, who had sent for Eleanor the day before, having

rallied from the paralytic stroke enough to speak and understand what was said to him; and had written to her a few sentences in which the words "poor David Stuart" were all she clearly made out.

Poor David Stuart!

Eleanor looked at the good pious old man who had befriended and instructed her childhood; as he lay helplessly there, his gray hair combed smooth by his servant, his blanched hands powerless and still; and she felt a gush of love and gratitude in her suffering heart. The words comforted her, in spite of the smile with which they were spoken; the shocking gentleness of that wandering paralytic smile, which always looks as if the soul were half way on its journey to another world, and but half conscious of beholding what it loved on earth.

Margaret's kindly presence was a comfort and relief to every one; her quenched gayety and brilliancy were replaced by a degree of active thoughtful tenderness, such as Eleanor had never witnessed in any one. She went about like a ministering angel, lifting Lady Raymond's crushed spirit, comforting frightened Emma, talking to old Mr. Fordyce as to a child —amusing that clouded spirit, making a gleam of cheerfulness for him, where all had been horror and alarm. Caressing Emma's little children, who were left stranded between the fright of their mother in attendance on their grandfather, and the stern angry gloom of Godfrey. Helping Godfrey himself, with household accounts and arrangements rendered necessary by the crash which had fallen upon them. For Aspendale must be given up; every thing must be sold; a great change must come to all. A great, miserable change.

Lady Margaret thought that as soon as all was ready for that change, Lady Raymond might move to the Rectory; but, meanwhile, though agents, and valuers, and lawyers came down from town, though inventories were made and business transacted all day long, Lady Raymond was never troubled. The door of that luxurious dressing-room was as if it had been the boundary of another world. She lay there on a sofa, in helpless unmolested sorrow, as in the days of her widowhood, when David Stuart first came to Aspendale. The bustle, and confusion, and vexation of spirits; weary exertion; early comings-in and late goings-out, reached her not; her uselessness was held sacred.

Not so with Eleanor; in all that was necessary to be done, she had her share. Lady Margaret knew the value and the duty of exertion in hours of grief, though Lady Raymond did not. It had pleased God that Eleanor's youth should be clouded by a great horror, and she had also to begin the world with utterly different prospects as to riches or poverty. Let her face the future with calm and rational submission to whatever was appointed for her. No one knew what that future would bring forth. Nothing was certain except that a great deal of present and immediate exertion was required. Let her make that exertion.

Eleanor showed herself worthy of her guide: and, only that these are the scenes the world does not witness, it would have been a sight to touch the hearts of those who had often watched the lovely chaperon enter a ball-room with the shy heiress, to see those two toil together through one of their weary days. The tender care of the pale girl which Margaret took, and yet the rational energy with which she inspired her. The profound sense of God's will in all things, with which she put on one side all murmurs of despair, and yet the cherishing comfort she gave. Always active—not always calm—perhaps Eleanor would have loved her less, if she could have been always calm. Sudden and passionate showers of tears replaced poor Margaret's sudden blushes; but her tears interrupted nothing of the duties of the hour. From the time she rose, and first met Eleanor in the morning, till her clear voice read the evening prayer which preceded their parting for the night, she missed no opportunity of service or of consolation.

And Eleanor loved and respected her; and would have laid bare to her every thought of her heart—except one: except that she had loved her guardian, and fancied that he loved her. Over that, the feelings of her young heart closed in silent gloom, as the deep sea closes over a sunken wreck.

And Margaret, whatever might have been the impression produced by David's strange agitation the day of the storm, and when she had first mentioned Sir Stephen's proposals, knew enough now to convince her that love for Eleanor, at least such love as they had fancied, was far from David's thoughts. Even his last letter, tender and despairing, was rather the letter of a guilty father to his injured child, than any other relation.

To Godfrey only, Godfrey, whom least of all Eleanor would have chosen as her confidant, did she speak in a moment of passion and suffering, so as to leave on his mind the indelible conviction of the attachment she had felt.

He had entered the drawing-room abruptly, with an open letter in his hand; he paused, and remained standing, gazing on Eleanor. At length he said gloomily:

"These events have made my mother fearfully ill."

There was a tinge of accusation in his tone, as if Eleanor were responsible for the past horrors. Her lips blanched, and she answered faintly:

"I, too, have been very ill."

"You are young, you are comparatively strong, you can not suffer as she does; and but for your fatal encouragement of that wretched man's assumption of authority, he would never have presumed so far on his position."

"Good heavens, Godfrey, I was a child; I knew nothing of these affairs; what terrible what shocking injustice!"

"You were old enough to encourage and countenance him to a degree that rendered my mother a complete cipher in her own house. The question now is, what is to be done? I have already restored by deed to my mother, and after her to you, ten thousand pounds of Sir John Raymond's bequest to me; the remainder was settled on Emma at our marriage, and I have no power over it. I might have sunk the money in a small annuity for my mother, but I do not conceive I should be doing strict justice toward you."

"Oh! do not speak of me—do not consider

me—let my poor mother have whatever there is."

"It is not from consideration or regard, but because I think it right;" said Godfrey, harshly. "I conceive I best fulfill my duty by restoring the money which was Sir John Raymond's, to his daughter. I am not to consider my own inclinations or compassion. He would not have bequeathed it to me, had he foreseen you might be penniless. I tell you what I have done; it adds but little to my mother's comfort, though it will destroy my wife's in a great measure, and throw me on my profession for an income. You have more in your power; and you owe it to my poor mother to do all you can."

"I—have more in my power?"

"Yes. Sir Stephen Penrhyn is still willing to marry you?"

"Willing!"

"Willing: proudly and scornfully as you echo it. There is his letter." Eleanor glanced at it; it was directed to Godfrey.

"Sir—Not knowing exactly whom to address myself to, after the exposure of the swindling transactions in which it appears Mr. Stuart was engaged, I write to you. I never sought Miss Raymond for her fortune; the late event, therefore, makes no difference in my sentiments. Miss Raymond may wish, under the circumstances, to make the condition that Lady Raymond shall reside with us. Will you state that this will be perfectly agreeable to me.

"Waiting your answer with great anxiety,

"I am, Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"Stephen Penrhyn."

"Oh! what a letter," said Eleanor, as the sudden picture of her mother's dependence on this man, who spoke so slightingly of her lost guardian, rose to her startled mind. "Oh! what a letter; never—I never can be his wife."

"I do not know what fault you find with the letter," said Godfrey; "he assumes your consent; I presume he has built on your encouragement; and in the most frank and straightforward manner, he goes to the next natural point and concedes it. When you know the world, you will know that he is acting generously by you."

"He does not express himself very generously by—others," said Eleanor, with hesitation and sadness.

"How should he? How should any honest man? The infamous treachery of Mr. Stuart—"

"Godfrey," said Eleanor passionately, "let there be an end of this. Say what you will to others; blame him, curse him, if you will; if you have the heart; but to me, to *me*, let his name and his memory remain sacred! He has perished for his fault—for the fortune I would have given him ten times over, to have saved him a day's uneasiness. Oh! that he were here," continued she, with increasing vehemence, "oh! that he had had patience with life, till I had said to him, 'think no more of it; live; be content; I will earn my bread with you—for you—I will be a governess, a servant."

"You will be a Bedlamite, I think," said Godfrey bitterly. "I tell you my mother's fortune is gone, with the fortune you were so willing to *lavish with yourself* on Mr. Stuart, but which it seems he preferred taking without the incumbrance. My mother is reduced to poverty; her health shaken, the decline of her life embittered by horrors and anxieties, created by the very man who was sacredly empowered to protect her; and instead of feeling as you should about her, you rave and rant about a man who, if he had not drowned himself, might have swung on the gallows! It is very fine to talk of going out as a governess, but is my mother to go out as a governess?"

The last sneer was lost on Eleanor. Pale, shuddering from head to foot, she sate clutching at the arms of her chair, as if the words Godfrey had spoken would have had power to sink her into the earth but for that support, and looking wildly in his face.

At this moment, Lady Margaret entered. Any one who remembers Pasta's fond and piteous caress to her children in the *Medea*, previous to singing the "Miseri Pargoletti," the folding of her graceful hands round those little heads, can form some idea of Lady Margaret, as she came forward and folded Eleanor to her bosom; and Eleanor turned and leaned there with a faint moan. The color flushed in Margaret's cheek.

"What is this, Mr. Marsden?" she said.

"It is, that Eleanor does not choose to hear crimes called by their right names, nor Mr. Stuart's conduct called in question. Infamous hypocrite! with his religion, and piety, and love of the poor!"

Lady Margaret was greatly agitated.

"He was not a hypocrite," said she. "It is the misfortune of weak and irresolute persons that they *seem* hypocrites. He had no strength, and he fell: he is dead—leave the judging him to God! His duty was to guard Eleanor's fortune, and he failed: your duty, in this hour of terror and misery, is to comfort and succor her: are you doing it? Oh! Mr. Marsden, how can *you*, who were yourself an orphan, substitute harshness for protection, where it is so much needed!"

"My harshness," said Godfrey, with bitter triumph, "appears to have been a fairer estimate of Mr. Stuart's character than you ever would allow; and so the end has proved."

He stalked from the room. Margaret turned to Eleanor.

"What is all this? What was he discussing with you, my poor child?" and she stroked the hair back from her forehead, and kissed her.

"They wish me to marry Sir Stephen Penrhyn," said Eleanor, in a despondent tone; "he has written again. Godfrey says my mother is ruined, and that I ought to consider that."

"But do you not like Sir Stephen? It seemed that you preferred him to others, that—"

"Oh! no—no!"

There was a pause. Then Margaret spoke, in a low clear coaxing voice, full of pity, and sweet as her own songs.

"Eleanor, I am sure—I know—that Godfrey has contrived to say whatever he has urged, painfully and gratingly; but do not let that warp your judgment as to his view of what should be done. You are very sad at present; I comprehend how little you can think of the future with any pleasure; but the future must come. This gentleman loves you very dearly: he has given evidence of disinterestedness; he is well spoken

of by every one; as far as we can calculate human probabilities, you would safely intrust your happiness to him."

"When I was very young," and here Margaret's voice grew still lower, sweeter, and clearer, "when I was very young, they wished me to marry Mr. Fordyce, who had then great expectations of inheritance; *I* was poor, though you would scarcely think it, Eleanor—you have no idea what a poor condition a poor dukedom is, with its pomp and stateliness, and feudal memories. My only brother was abroad, finishing his education; my father and mother dead; my good old grandmother living in the gaunt gray castle at Lanark's Lodge, like one of the benevolent fairies in old magic tales. We saw very few people; yet even among these few, I had my girlish preference."

Margaret suddenly stopped, and the tears rose to her eyes; then she ended more hurriedly, and very earnestly:

"I do assure you, my dearest Eleanor, that I was so perfectly happy with Mr. Fordyce, I loved him so entirely, that I have sometimes doubted whether any other lot could have satisfied my heart as well. My married life was one of unbroken sunshine: I would not have changed my noble-hearted husband for any other human being. I have smiled when people have spoken of the disparity of our ages, of our change of prospects when an unexpected marriage sent his inheritance to a different branch of the Fordyce family. I did not ask if others were younger, richer, or handsomer—I loved *him;* and I was proud of his loving me. I say this to you," continued she more calmly, after a pause of some moments, "lest you should think it impossible—as many girls do—to make a happy marriage without being in love. My marriage was a happy one, Eleanor."

But Eleanor only sighed heavily.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to come to some decision: it was necessary to answer Sir Stephen's letter. Eleanor sent for Godfrey the next day, and told him she consented.

"But warn Sir Stephen Penrhyn," said she after a few hurried sentences of explanation, "as he hopes to marry me—as he expects me to prefer this marriage for my mother's sake, never to mention my guardian—"

"Your *guardian!*" said Godfrey, with withering contempt.

"Never to mention Mr. Stuart," repeated Eleanor with pale lips, but haughty firmness, "at all to me: least of all in the terms used in his letter. Abuse of the dead can not serve my mother, and it is a needless addition to my pain."

Godfrey sate down to write at once. He wrote angrily and rapidly; he said precisely what Eleanor bid him; and he pushed the sheet of paper across the table, as if sullenly submitting it for her approval. But one of those chance associations of which Byron speaks as—

"Striking the electric chain where with we are darkly bound,"

smote Eleanor's heart

The sound of Godfrey's pen hurriedly passing over the paper, reminded her of the fever through which David Stuart had nursed her when a child: when she heard him writing—conscious, but too weak to do more than lie listening.

All returned:—the pale anxious face; the heavy, tender eyes, that had watched so many nights for her sake; the sound of his voice in prayer; the cherishing touch of his hand, enfolding hers while he prayed; all the daily, hourly, habitual tenderness of that poor wretch who had rushed uncalled to meet his God; who was dead, disgraced; he whose face she might never see again, in that blank, sick world where others were wooing her; and suddenly overwhelmed her. She rose, as Godfrey put the letter before her; she tossed her clasped hands above her head with a despairing wail; and dropping down again in her chair, she sobbed as though her heart would break.

Godfrey looked at her with more than usual displeasure.

"Don't be so like an actress, for Heaven's sake!" said he.

This was a favorite phrase with Godfrey; as it is with many persons of impassive manners. It never seems to strike them that the actress copies nature—nature, it may be, in her exaggerated moments, but nature still. The stride of the savage, the gesticulation of the Frenchman, are foreign to us, but natural to them. I have heard and smiled at the observation, "What a beautiful moonlight! it is like a scene on the stage!" Was the moonlight less real for the comparison?

But these were reflections Godfrey never made. He knew that he could submit to be shot, hung at the yard-arm, or follow the funeral of his wife and children, without the moving of a muscle, or the quivering of an eyelash. That being *his* manner of enduring grief or pain, it appeared to him the model manner. He could not conceive of, or admit any other. All his lines of admiration and esteem, concentred in the perspective point of self.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELEANOR'S BRIDEGROOM.

Sir Stephen Penrhyn's arrival at Aspendale, as Miss Raymond's accepted suitor, brought a certain degree of cheerfulness to all but the object of his suit. Lady Raymond saw him with curiosity, and a sort of complacent triumph. Her pretty daughter's conquest! her son-in-law that was to be! She also admired him; as she admired Godfrey; and wondered Eleanor was not prouder of him, for many were Sir Stephen's stories of bets won by marvelous feats of swimming, such as none ever performed but Byron and Leander; of pistol-shots at a shilling held between his finger and thumb; of steeple-chases, and leaps, that made the listener gape with wonder both at the horse and his rider, and sometimes secretly question the exactitude of the anecdotes told.

Godfrey received him with more cordiality than he had yet shown to any acquaintance; they talked together of David Stuart's unprincipled and dastardly conduct. Lady Margaret had always been kind to Eleanor's admirer; and some of the old smiles came back, while she welcomed and congratulated him.

At first there was some disposition, on the parts of all, to soothe him by excuses for Elea-

nor's utter dejection and shyness; to reason with him on the allowance to be made for her, seeing the great horror that had occurred, and that she had been brought up from childhood by the man who had destroyed himself. They were all afraid Sir Stephen's feelings might be wounded; but they might have spared themselves the anxiety.

Perhaps no better explanation can be given of the nature of Sir Stephen's attachment than the fact, that it was a secondary consideration with him whether Eleanor seemed "in love," or not, so long as she accepted him. Let the marriage take place; that was the boundary of his requisition. If Stuart had died on the gallows—if he had died on the rack—what was that to Sir Stephen? The event, as he truly said, made no change in his sentiments. Her fortune was gone: very well; his was not; he had still eighteen thousand a year and his prospects. Give her to him. Don't make circumstances seem obstacles that were in fact facilities. Give him this beggared beauty; he wanted her, not her fortune. Give her to him, there, now; under what conditions they pleased; settlements, or no settlements; debts, or no debts; love, or no love. Of course, he would be glad to inspire her with affection, if he could; but if not, still let her be his—his, dressed like other brides, in smiles and blushes, or choked in sobs and mourning: His at all hazards! His passion for her was as a bird of prey, swooping down to seize her in its talons. Hope, tenderness, courtship, delay, were as little present in his thoughts, as in the hawk that sweeps its circle and drops through the air. Life was a restless fever, till the preparations for his marriage were completed; all signed and settled; the journey to Edinburgh made; the wedding over; and that pale wonder of the world his by every law human and divine; his, so that he would have the right to smite and slay any man who attempted to wrench her from him.

There are women who think it sublime to be loved with this sort of passion; who are proud of inspiring it. The sublime of sensuality! It is a love, which when the sum is cast up, and the loss and gain balanced, can be effaced as easily as the figures on a child's slate. It is a love which retains no memory of the past, and gives no hold over the future. Many a poor village girl has lived to learn its worth; and marveled in the simple-heartedness of her despair, how it was that tears and prayers failed to move one who seemed so ready to lay down life for her smile; how it was that the same man who was well-nigh shooting himself for her sake, could almost see her drown herself with indifference. "He loved me once—how can he be so hard with me now?" Poor little sorrowful fool, he never loved you; he loved himself. Love is pitiful, and prone to sacrifice. Look back, and see who made those sacrifices. You did. Now, dig for pity in that sterile heart, and find the soil—hot sand!

Meanwhile, Sir Stephen did his best, after his own method, to please and conciliate every one round him. He showered gifts on Emma's little children; he would have bestowed toys of solid gold, if they had desired them. He ordered all Lady Raymond's Indian shawls, trinkets, *knick-knacks, and* treasures, to be bought in at the sale at any price they were bid up to. The servants thought they had never seen such a generous-hearted gentleman in their lives. All the morning he went about with the lady's-maid, making lists of things which the woman knew or imagined her mistress would be loth to lose; and all the evening he sate and contemplated Eleanor—Eleanor dressed in the pretty, gay, light colors Margaret had chosen for her season in town. For the death of the man she loved, his dreadful death, did not give her any right to wear mourning. He was no relation. That poor sinner, of whom no one spoke, now that the first burst of inquiry, execration, and blame was over, was nothing to those he had loved, and served, and ruined—nothing to Eleanor!

And so she sate, in her bright shot-silks, working at the gay curtain border of crimson and white roses, which she had worked at all the summer; looking up with vague, frightened eyes at Sir Stephen when he spoke; trying to collect the sense of what he said, in her wandering brain; trying to like him, and feel grateful to him, because he would not allow her mother's things to be disturbed or sold; and because he was to be her husband, and it was shocking to feel the horror of him that she did, from the terrible associations connected with his letter of proposals. Poor Eleanor! she strove hard; and Margaret's tender smile, from time to time silently encouraged her, in her attempts to converse with the man whose presence was to replace for life that dear vision of a perpetuated companionship, lost to her forever!

Once only, in the petty, every-day incidents that are all so marked in the first hour of affliction, all courage and self-command forsook her. Sir Stephen proposed that she should take a ride with him. It would do her good to ride. Margaret looked out at the calm autumn day, and thought so too. Eleanor came down equipped to the portico, where Sir Stephen was already waiting for her. The groom was leading the horses up and down before the door. Eleanor stood still, and shuddered. David Stuart's horse and her own were there. Nothing could be more natural: the riding-horses being ordered, the ordinary mechanical routine of service was performed: little the whistling groom cared who rode the sleek animal committed to his charge: he adjusted the stirrups and reins.

"Shall I assist you?" said Sir Stephen.

"Thank you; the groom;" said Eleanor, faintly.

Still she stood, breathing heavily, and looking around. There was Margaret, waiting to see them mount, as formerly: her sweet face paler than Eleanor had yet seen it, but with a smile—a loving, pitying smile. There were the horses; *his* horse, that was fed from Margaret's basket of roses on that day marked out from other usual days only by a secret remembrance. But where was he?

David Stuart was dead; drowned in the roaring Linn. He would ride no more with Eleanor; nor walk, nor read, nor speak, nor smile; the cold autumn wind blew over the restless waterfall, whose murmur seemed to sound in her ear; the histful pleading glance of his eyes rose to her memory; sunshine, and trees, and paths, and hills, where they had rode together, pressed

confusedly on her brain; the marble pillars of the portico, against which Margaret leaned with golden-braided hair, flickered with strange shadows, and reeled and shook unsteadily in her sight.

"Oh! I can not—I can not," muttered the poor girl; and in attempting to move back to that gentle friend, she lost consciousness, and sank fainting in Sir Stephen's arms.

In his arms! that shy stately queen of his fancy, who was distant to him as a picture or a dream. A fierce fear thrilled his heart that he yet might lose her; that death might rob him of his promised bride; and as he strained her convulsively to his breast, he himself turned ghastly pale.

"She is not recovered enough to ride yet; she has been so unwell lately," said Lady Margaret. "Let me take off her hat and vail; let me attend to her; you will stifle her," added she, with an amazed impatient effort to release Eleanor.

But she moved him no more than if it had been a statue of Force, holding a broken lily. Still he held her fast; till a gasping sigh told of returning life, and the mournful eyes re-opened and fixed themselves on his face.

The accidents of physical preference and physical disgust are beyond our ken, and depend perhaps more than we are ourselves aware, on slight threads of association woven in the web of memory.

When Eleanor recovered consciousness, the grasp that held her was the first idea that presented itself. Inexplicably, the day recurred when first she saw Sir Stephen, the dreadful strength of his arm, lashing poor Ruellach. Inexplicably also, the gentle touch of David Stuart's hand, assisting her to dismount, or arranging the reins in her first riding lessons. She felt, she knew not why, a sort of horror of that strength of which Sir Stephen was so proud. There was something terrible and repulsive to her in the savage fondness of his locked embrace —in the wild eagerness of his anxious eyes. It was with a sick shudder that she turned from him and placed her hand in Margaret's.

"I have been so ill; I do not feel equal to riding," was all she said; and for a moment, the bride and bridegroom, so strangely betrothed, looked wistfully at each other. Then Eleanor's glance dropped. The horses were being led back to the stable, and her gaze sadly followed them. They were to be sold in a few days; so much the better. Let every thing be swept away that bore traces of the past.

She was glad that her marriage was to take place in Edinburgh, and not at Aspendale: not in that quiet village church, where her dream had been to stand as the wedded wife of David Stuart, and hear the marriage blessing from the lips of her earliest and dearest friend, old Mr. Fordyce. She was glad that all was to be so strange and new around her, that it would seem rather as if she were transported into another more dreary world, than continuing her struggle in this. Only Ruellach, and Stuart's servant Sandy, remained as links to the old happy times.

The latter had pleaded hard to be allowed to remain in the service of the family. He had been with Sir John many years, and had followed David to England. Old, quaint, and nearly useless as he seemed, Sir Stephen showed considerable reluctance in granting the petition in his favor, even when urged by Eleanor.

"He thought, perhaps, you would let him keep one of the lodges; he knows the place," said she.

"What lodge? Who has been talking of the place? Who has been talking of the lodge?" said Sir Stephen; with a glance of such sudden anger at the man, as startled and astonished Eleanor.

"'Deed, then, Sir Stephen, I'm frae the Duke o' Lanark's pairt o' the country—ye ken that's no far off; but if I'll no hae the lodge, put me whar ye wull. I'd like weel eneugh to be undergairdener. I'm rare at sortin' seeds, and makin' cane-work for ladies' bowers—her ladyship kens I did muckle o' that in India; and I'm rare at making flies for fushing; there's no a fush in the lake but I'll find a fly for him. I'm gude at a hunder things. Just tak me as odd han' and try me. I'm thinkin' ye'll find me of mair use than ye'd weel believe."

"You are to take him as *odd man*, Sir Stephen," said Eleanor, with the nearest approach to a smile Sir Stephen had yet seen on her sad face. He looked at her upward-pleading eyes, and longed to speak familiarly and gayly to her, as a bridegroom might; to say, "Well, thank me, and kiss me, and have it your own way." But to speak familiarly to Eleanor, was what Sir Stephen had yet to learn; and he therefore awkwardly conceded, after a moment's hesitation, the favor she asked, and dismissed Sandy to his duties.

"Thank you very much," said Eleanor; and she held out her hand to him. He seized her hand eagerly; the passionate wish again beat in his heart, but as he looked on her pale cold cheek, fear again checked him. He leaned against the window where they were standing, and counted the days that would intervene before she was his wedded wife.

They past, those days—swiftly they past, to all but to him. To the busy restless servants, who had more to do than twice that number of days seemed sufficient to enable them to accomplish; to Lady Raymond, who dreaded leaving the home she had inhabited before she was a widow; to poor Emma, who felt more frightened and forsaken every hour, as she contemplated the approach of the week she was to spend without her husband, alone with her paralytic and speechless father, who seemed scarcely conscious of Eleanor's weeping farewell.

Godfrey was to accompany them as far as Edinburgh, and give his half-sister away. Lady Margaret, too, would go with them; and the Duke and Duchess of Lanark were to be present at the wedding, their little girls and Euphemia to be bridesmaids. It was the only compliment in their power on this occasion, and Sir Stephen was proud and gratified, and expected that it would be extremely gratifying also to his sister.

But he over-rated the placability of that remarkable lady. Outraged as she had originally been, on behalf of the whole body of noble Scotch women, at her brother's choice of an English girl, a mere nobody; "whose father was just a general, and her mother the Lord knows who;" there was yet the redeeming circumstance that the bride elect had a very large fortune. A

sullen welcome had dawned with that thought, and had been intended for the unwitting Eleanor.

But when the fact was made known of Miss Raymond's being literally and positively a beggar, the very clothes for her *trousseau* (if she had one), paid for by the inveigled and deluded Sir Stephen; Lady Macfarren's wrath knew no bounds. She wrote a few scornful taunting lines at the last moment, saying that she presumed it would not be an over-gay wedding, after the "cheatery" that had been practiced, and "the death of that sinful creature, Mr. Stuart;" that she doubted not both mother and daughter knew well enough the situation of affairs long before that just catastrophe, and had cunningly drawn Sir Stephen on, till he could not retract; that the Earl of Peebles, their cousin, being then laid up in her house with an attack of gout, and other friends staying with her who she thought it would be most especially awkward either to leave or to bring to the wedding, she had relinquished all intention of honoring the ceremony with her presence, and thought that the less that was said or done about it, in the eye of the Edinburgh folk, and the sooner her brother and his bride came away to Glencarrick, the better; for that they "could not conceal from themselves that it was altogether a shameful and contrairy business."

Sir Stephen reddened as he refolded this gracious epistle, and almost for the first time in his life, felt utter rebellion rise in his heart against the tyrannical government over his mind exercised by his portentous sister.

An excuse from the Earl of Peebles, in a style as kindly as the hand writing was crabbed, somewhat restored his composure. It was accompanied by a beautiful pearl necklace for the bride, and a jocose assurance that he sent it before he saw her, lest it should be supposed he intended any gallantry afterward; as he expected to find her very pretty, and his gout was not in his eyes, which were always open to the charms of the fair.

Still, Sir Stephen felt comparatively little the defection of the two principal members of his own family, and the attempt (not altogether unsuccessful) on his sister's part, to make him feel as though his marriage were a disgraceful one. He was too much "in love" to care. All things faded now into insignificance, that could neither advance nor retard his marriage.

Lady Macfarren would have been perfectly astounded at the carelessness with which her letter was thrust away, and the indifference felt to the absence even of the Earl of Peebles, when Lady Margaret came in to discuss with Sir Stephen the arrangements for the morrow.

For it was "the morrow" now: one day's light to die away, and the sun to rise again, and Eleanor Raymond was Eleanor Penrhyn. Before that morrow's sun went down they would be man and wife—man and wife!

The last evening waned slowly away Margaret spoke but little; her eyes rested fondly and frequently on Eleanor, and filled now and then with furtive tears. The Duchess of Lanark talked much of her own bridal days, and bridal dress; and her extreme youth and *naïveté* at that time, and of the jealousy her little dog had shown of the duke; how, for many days, it always came whining to her dressing-room door, and could not understand that any one else should be there, but barked and flew at her husband. Such a wise little thing it was—a Scotch terrier; Scotch terriers were always more attached than other dogs, and cleverer—much cleverer. And while she prattled on, making little running commentaries on past nothings, Eleanor sat as in a trance, as one neither fearing nor hoping, but locked in a lethargic dream. Only when they all rose to say good night, and Lady Raymond observed that she "looked pale and tired, though it was quite early," she glanced wildly round, with a terrified, bewildered air, as though some one were missing, or some shadowy spectre had flitted past—and shrank trembling to her mother's side.

So the day came: and the hour. The solemn vow was spoken; the golden ring circled her finger; the embrace of mother, brother, and friends, congratulated the bride; the carriages drew up that were to convey Lady Raymond and her maid, and "the happy pair" to Glencarrick; and as Eleanor leaned back, too faint to do more than set her foot on the carriage step; she felt her husband's arm, supporting—almost lifting her in—eager and strong, as on the day he lashed Ruellach!

CHAPTER XX.

A BRIDAL VISIT.

They did not immediately go to Castle Penrhyn: Glencarrick was nearer: better shooting was to be had there, and from boyhood Sir Stephen had been accustomed to spend a couple of months at this time of the year with his sister. They were expected; and to Glencarrick they went.

It was late when they arrived, and the chill gloom of the autumn evening was suddenly exchanged for the warmth and light of a wood fire, by whose flickering upward blaze Eleanor beheld with dazzled eyes, a very tall bony woman standing on the rug, speaking rather loudly and jestingly with a little gouty smiling old man, ensconced in an old-fashioned arm-chair, that looked like a carved throne. The room, which was large and lofty, had a pleasant smell of pine-wood, the walls being of that material; it looked cheerful and handsome by the flickering light, and at even distances the antlers of some king of the forest were nailed up as trophies of successful sport. The tall lady did not move from the spot where she was standing, but she looked toward the door as they entered, and extended both hands as Sir Stephen approached. She did not kiss her brother, but greeted him heartily, as a friendly man might have done, and her arms seemed as strong as his own, or stronger.

When Sir Stephen presented his bride, she stiffened her already erect figure, as if to reduce Eleanor to the proper level of insignificance, and then made a haughty, almost imperceptible inclination of the head. The Earl of Peebles claimed a less ceremonious introduction, and rising from his carved and cushioned throne, kissed her on both cheeks, chuckling as he did so, and assuring her that he had in his time kissed a good many brides, but none that he felt such an

interest in, and that if she were a good girl and loved Sir Stephen, he would not endanger her future prospects of becoming Countess of Peebles by marrying and presenting a bride, and a family of his own; though such things had been, when heirs thought themselves most sure of their inheritance. After which, softly patting her hand, he subsided into the carved throne, and looked smilingly at the fire. Lady Macfarren eyed Eleanor from head to foot.

"Well, you seem tired enough, and pale enough," said she gruffly, making a sort of gesture as if motioning her to stand nearer the warm blaze.

"I am not much tired," said Eleanor, "and I am always pale."

"Humph! my brother wrote us word that you were a great beauty, that's all. I suppose London hours, and fine lady ways—"

"I have been very little in London."

"Humph! how old are you?"

"I am seventeen."

"You look much older; I should think now you're safely married, you could have no objection to tell your real age."

"I was seventeen last August," said Eleanor, in rather a proud tone, though she struggled with her tears, not at the extraordinary and inhospitable reception granted her, but at the sudden recollection of her birth-day, in all the quiet and happiness of Aspendale, before fatal events had broken up that dear home. She sate down, and patted Ruellach's head, as he had stretched himself without ceremony on the rug.

"That's a largish dog for the drawing-room, Leddy Penrhyn."

"It shall not come in, if you dislike it. Is this the drawing-room?"

"Ay, is it. Did you think it was the kitchen?" said Lady Macfarren, with a sneer.

"Sir Stephen felt irritated; but habitual submission to his sister subdued his tone, as he observed, that a highland shooting lodge was so different to what Eleanor had ever seen, that she might stand excused for her question.

"But I think the room quite beautiful" said Eleanor gently; "and I think the smell of the fir-wood the pleasantest thing in the world."

"We'll make a highland lass of you in no time," said the delighted Lord Peebles, reaching out his hand again to pat hers, while her sister-in-law moved away, much like a dog that has been ordered not to spring on a wayfarer.

Lady Raymond, whose carriage had followed at some little distance, was now announced, and Sir Stephen led her forward and presented her by name.

Lady Macfarren's reception was one degree more freezing, if possible, than that bestowed on Eleanor.

Lady Raymond was much fatigued, very delicate, and accustomed to be greatly caressed, and gently dealt with; she therefore nervously responded to the questions put to her by her extraordinary hostess, and burst into tears.

"What's the matter now?" said Lady Macfarren.

"My dearest mother!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"I don't know," sobbed Lady Raymond, "but it's all so strange."

"Humph! well, it can't be stranger to you than it is to me, that's one comfort: and now we'll all go to our rooms, for it's late."

"I hope," said Sir Stephen to his wife, as he left her to dress for dinner, "that your mother will avoid offending my sister in any way."

The look of unrestrained amazement with which this speech was met, confused and irritated Sir Stephen.

"I mean," said he, impatiently, "that I hope they will get on as well as they can together. My sister, you see, is a woman of very superior mind, and she has always held a most important position in our family; indeed I may say that Lord Peebles himself would hardly do any thing without consulting her; and she is rather proud; and my marriage has not altogether—in fact, circumstances—you see I don't like to vex you by stating all my reasons, but I think we should do better, you know, if you and your mother knocked under a little."

"Knocked under a little!" Eleanor mused upon the words, and looked doubtfully at her husband, as if seeking further information.

"My sister can be kind enough when she chooses," said he, "but she don't choose to be braved."

"Braved!"

"D—n it, she don't like people to be too independent, you know; when—when they can't be independent, you know. If this could all be understood at once, I'm sure we should get on very comfortably; and if it ain't, I know enough of Janet to know that we shan't, that's all."

"I suppose Lady Macfarren will not be offended without good reason?" said Eleanor, after a pause.

"Well, of course she'll have reasons—reasons of her own, you know; but she's proud, as I told you. Now, I thought your way of answering her about your age, rather—rather short, as if you were offended."

"I was not offended. I was surprised; because she did not seem to believe me, and because such questions are not asked on a first introduction."

"Well, but you know she must judge what questions she'll ask, and she likes to be answered carefully and considerately; in fact, she's always offended if she's not answered in that way.

Especially, thought Eleanor, by people who can't be independent. The phrase, and the hesitating tone in which it was spoken, lingered in her heart. She felt all its meaning. Yes, she and her mother were beggars—beggars rescued from beggary by this rich man, because he had fallen in love with Eleanor, and married her. Having married her, ought he not to cherish and protect her, whether his sister liked the marriage or not? Was it all right, and natural, and a matter of course, that he should warn her not to offend, instead of warding off offense from her? Was this husband's love? The long tresses of her hair were braided by the poor ayah, in the most complicated and graceful plaits, before Eleanor had resolved this question. She sate before the mirror, but she did not see the reflection of her own sad face; she was trying darkly to see into her future.

"Do you not like it, my lady?"

"Like what?" said Eleanor.

"The plaiting of your hair." Eleanor kissed

the poor ayah, who had been her nurse when a child, and said with a sigh:

"It is very pretty, but I was thinking of something else."

When the party assembled for dinner, several more introductions took place; none of which seemed to possess any interest; till at one of the new names, Eleanor positively started.

"Leddy Penrhyn, Mrs. Christison, of Dunleath, and Miss Christison, desire to make acquaintance with ye."

Mrs. Christison of Dunleath! the widow of the writer who had bought Mr. Stuart's property; the person with whom David had treated for the possession of the home of his ancestors! Eleanor strove to speak, but her words were inarticulate. She looked at the old lady and her daughter. Over the features of the latter, who was a fat, bold-looking spinster, with a profusion of fair curls and hard keen eyes, flashed a gleam of curiosity so vivid, that it had the effect of recalling Eleanor to herself. Over the somewhat plaintive countenance of her sober little mother, there stole an equally evident degree of compassion. "Ye're quite strange here yet, Leddy Penrhyn," was all the old lady said, but in the tone there was sympathy. Miss Tabitha Christison eyed the young bride rather scornfully. Tabitha (or Tib, as her mother and friends called her), was not fond of young, pretty, people; and it was rumored besides, that she had herself aspired to the position Eleanor occupied as Sir Stephen's wife. Matrimony had never been absent from Tib's thoughts since she was sixteen, and she was now five-and-forty. She shifted her cards, but she played them still; patiently and dauntlessly, whenever there was an opportunity. Not that Tib had been without wooers, for she had been a comely "sonsie lassie," and might be rich, if her mother divided what she had to leave between her and her brother. But those that wooed her she would not marry, and those she desired to marry would not woo. So it came to pass that Tib was an old maid.

Now, of old maids there are many kinds. Cuvier himself could scarcely have classed the multitude of the species. The patient, pious old maid; the brisk, busy old maid; the gaunt, the precise, the dressy, the grim, the gossiping, the spiteful, the kindly; all these, buzzing in and out of the world's great hive, may puzzle us by their variety. But one great distinction they share with the rest of their fellow-creatures, married or single: there are bad and good old maids. One species, gentle, meek, useful; having no ties of their own, making ties of the very tenderness and affection of their yearning hearts; nursing sick children; looking after the poor; taking all the trouble off the hands of some overburdened mother of a family; governess, friend, housekeeper, and humble companion, all in one; women perfect in their way; women who lack nothing of being saints, except canonization.

But to balance the love we might otherwise feel for the lonely race, there is another species: busy-bodies; intriguers, thrusting themselves out of their own solitary homes into the homes of others, to work earwigs in the core of fruit; toad-eaters; slanderers; full of flattery; full of *spite; struggling to keep* their ground by the meanest concessions; affecting not to perceive the most open rebuffs; ready to undermine by the grossest treachery; envious; pitiless; daughters of the father of lies, and serving him perpetually.

Tib Christison belonged to the latter class. Many a home had rued her presence; but she had her welcome yet, where she was not found out. She had her welcome at Glencarrick, and well she kept her ground. Lady Macfarren spoke of Tib as a "good, useful body." Tib was never out of sorts, or out of temper with her; though she might be heard rating her poor old mother in their private room. Tib played Scotch reels for an indefinite length of time, or danced them, according as was needed. Tib had receipts infallible for gout and rheumatism; Tib knew how game could be preserved for the longest possible period; and where the finest Shetland spinning could be done, at the cheapest possible rate. If a multiplicity of tiresome commissions had to be executed, Tib was charged with them when she went to Edinburgh. If a "wearyfu'" guest had to be entertained, Tib was the uncomplaining sacrifice; if more guests came than the house conveniently held, Tib gave up her room for a garret.

Tib appeared, indeed, to be continually practicing the most laborious self-denial; but Tib knew what she was about. For the last three years, or more, a visionary coronet floated before her eyes. The service she seemed to give to all, was in truth offered only at the shrine of that kind little Dagon on the carved throne, who had promised Eleanor not to cut out Sir Stephen, by becoming a husband and father. The Earl of Peebles (or as old Mrs. Christison always called him, "the Airle") was Tib's mark. For the sake of a footing in Penrhyn Castle and Glencarrick, Tib bore all insolence and all trouble. For the sake of its neighborhood to Penrhyn Castle, lone and lovely Dunleath had been still retained, when its owner most desired to part with it. Tib's progress was slow and uncertain, but it was progress. Year after year her courtship of the little Dagon went silently on. She wooed him with knitted flannels, and caressed him with rheumatic embrocations. He could not do without her. She was wary of landing her fish, but she felt he was hooked. Feebler and less capable of resistance he became day by day, as she wound the strong line of determination round the creel of her will. And all this time Lady Macfarren was blind (as people very often are on these great occasions), blind, from the very audacity of the scheme concocted under her eyes. The notion of such wild ambition on the part of that good useful body the writer's daughter, as her marrying the Airle, the head of their illustriously obscure house, never once occurred to her.

"Amuse Lord Peebles, Tib; I'm going out."

—"Give your arm to Lord Peebles, for a turn in the garden, Tib; he's a little lame to-day."

And good useful Tib obeyed with compassionate alacrity.

Nor was Lord Peebles himself clearer: the Airle had been an embassador; but Tib was the shrewder diplomatist of the two.

Eleanor, however, was not as blind as Lady Macfarren. To her amazed eyes it immediately

appeared that some odd sort of courtship was going on; a courtship *à l'envers*, since in this instance the lady was the wooer.

After dinner had been lingered through, and a somewhat tipsy company of gentlemen assembled, Scotch reels were the order of the night. Apparently the fit of gout that had prevented Lord Peebles from attending Eleanor's marriage, must have been very slight; for, from a spectator, he became an actor in the busy scene. He danced; he cried "Hech!" he snapped his fingers with feeble jauntiness; making roguish faces, now at Eleanor, and now at Tib. Tib neutralized these attempts at familiarity, by demure and majestic glances; but she danced with an activity which perfectly astounded the young sister-in-law, who felt, while her partner set to her and cut the figure of the reel, as though she beheld a very large lamp, with a little white moth flitting round it.

While they were resting from the dance, some remarks were made on the various persons who composed the company; and Lord Peebles, looking at a gaunt, red-haired individual in a kilt, who had been very attentive to Tib, said:

"That's your brother Christison's partner, Mr. Malcolm, Miss Tib; ain't it? What does he wear the kilt for? I hear he's one of your suitors, and I am sorry to hear it, for the youth's just like the ghost of Rob Roy."

"Oh! but you're a droll man, Lord Peebles; I vow ye make me laugh with thae comparisons. The ghos to' Rob Roy! Deed then it's a fact, that Nature was ow'r scrimping in makin' him; she hadna stuff to spare. But I'm no for a ghost I can tell ye, nor for a penniless writer's son neither, which young Mr. Malcolm is; and I'm thinking his suit 'ill be ill-suited, if he makes it to me. The ghost o' Rob Roy! did one ever hear the like? I declare I'll be afraid for ye, if ye're so sateerical, tho' we're old friends. The ghost of Rob Roy, eh?"

Tib laughed so much, and so heartily, she seemed so entertained, that evidently she contrived to bewilder the Airle into thinking he had said something very amusing. He laughed and rubbed his little hands, and looked with glee at the unconscious Highlander who was the subject of their remarks. But while, for the twentieth time, Tib giggled over Lord Peebles' jest, she suddenly caught Eleanor's eye; its expression displeased her for in it Tib thought she read contempt and repugnance; and perhaps she was right. And she treasured the memory of that look, for Tib was a great hoarder-up of small slights; being convinced of her own value, and that sooner or later the day would come when she could repay them. Once again, in the course of the evening, the expression of poor Eleanor's face was distasteful to her; Lord Peebles was complimenting his new relation on her beauty.

"My *certie* (as Mrs. Christison says), if we'd met when you were single and I was for marrying, I know some young ladies who'd have been hard run; you're a sweet lily blossom, and I envy my cousin Stephen, I can tell you."

Eleanor smiled at the old man, while he chuckled over this speech; her smile had neither mockery or merriment in it, but a sort of calm gentle compassion, and it displeased Tib.

When Tib went to bed that night, she felt that she hated young Lady Penryhn; she thought with vague fierceness of the new-comer; and she twisted her hair into its multifarious curl-papers, with such hard final pinches, that she must have dreamed she had the bride in her fingers. Poor Eleanor! as she murmured the words in her evening prayer, "Deliver us from evil," she little knew that two rooms off, the fat old maid was closing her hard keen eyes, her bitter and irreconcilable foe.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOSPITALITY AT GLENCARLICH.

Yes, Tib Christison hated Eleanor, undeserved as her hatred might seem. If we were only disliked for the real and voluntary offense we give, what a holiday world this would be!

But some hearts are so full of gall, that they brim over, and the drops fall on their fellow-creatures as they pass. Some they dislike from hearsay; some for a chance look or word misinterpreted; some for very envy of natural advantages, which they neither earned nor can surrender, but carry about with them a stamp set upon them by God: of far less importance, perhaps, in their own eyes, than in the eyes of those who grudge those advantages; for they have tested their value by possession, and know how, in His supreme justice, all such inequalities are balanced. The poor see the rich go by in carriages and think that wealth must be happiness; the rich know that it is not so.

But we will not affirm that Eleanor gave no offense; that of course must depend on what is considered an offense. With Tib, to be young, handsome, and a bride, was to offend. With Lady Macfarren, not "to knock under," as Sir Stephen had elegantly phrased it, was to offend.

Eleanor was very gentle, but she had a sort of calm superiority of manner, intolerable to her bony and stalwart sister-in-law. The latter had expected to rule a shame-stricken, dejected, and trembling beggar; in love with her brother; a mere school-girl in age; frightened and anxious. When she saw the bride, her very soul was disquieted and astonished by the tranquil dignity of her deportment, and the look of thought in her steady serious eyes; nor was she without a certain feminine instinct that told her at once Eleanor did not love Sir Stephen. It increased the suspicions she had conceived, that the coming crash of her large fortune was known to the widow and daughter before they accepted him. She saw in them, two subtle schemers, whose plans for worldly rescue from difficulties had amply succeeded. Was it possible to lose so much money, and be so quiet about it, if it had not been a thing foreseen and foreknown?

True, Stuart had drowned himself, to avoid disgrace and exposure; but that proved nothing as regarded Lady Raymond and her daughter. Money! How dare she take so coolly the fact of her having no money, after having passed as a great heiress? How dare she behave in all respects as she would have done if she had married him in the pride and pomp and glory of having five thousand a year?

And she was not in love with him! If Lady

Macfarren loved any thing, in her hard, cold, narrow heart, it was her half-brother. True, she had worked like a mole with her doting old father, to get portions of the unentailed property settled on herself, to the prejudice of Sir Stephen; but that was because she loved money better than all Next to money, she loved Sir Stephen; better perhaps as the head of the family, the means of reflected consequence, the chief object of importance in her life, than as her brother, but she loved him; and it was with bitter resentment that she thought of his being entrapped and deluded by this pale-faced, Indian-born, delicate-looking girl; slight and stately as a reed in flower; proud as a queen, and poor as a shepherdess. He who might, in Lady Macfarren's opinion, have been considered a good match for a duke's daughter, and have been adored into the bargain.

The treatment, therefore, of the young bride by Lady Macfarren and Miss Christison, partook of those three varieties of conduct which an old-fashioned historian informs us were practiced by the fashionable ladies of the Court of Queen Elizabeth, in their intercourse with each other; namely, the "privy nip," the "fleering frump," and the "open flout;" all of which methods I have also seen practiced by the ladies of the Court of Queen Victoria; the "privy nip" being, I think, most in vogue among young ladies (who are obliged, in their little animosities, to keep up a semblance of friendship and civility); the "fleering frump," among married women jealous of each other; and the "open flout," unquestionably the line of the more magnificent ladies; great marchionesses, and patronesses of Almack's.

That Eleanor suffered under this reign of covert hostilities, was not to be doubted; but she did not complain, and showed neither resentment nor resistance. Indeed, she was the most provoking person to offend in the world, for she never appeared to comprehend that the offense was willful. Her reserve and her repugnance visibly increased, but she was calm and polite; she did not behave as though any peculiar aggression against herself were going on, but as if she thought she was living among disagreeable people; and her mode of taking these battering assaults confounded and maddened Lady Macfarren.

It was always some petty annoyance that was practiced. Those who know life, know that petty annoyances are sometimes more difficult to bear than more important misfortunes, for which we prepare the courage of our souls, and which we have high and holy motives for endeavoring to sustain. Petty was the warfare; petty the suffering; and petty the triumph; the resistance *nil*. Once it was a question whether Lady Raymond should not have a sofa placed in her bed-room. Mrs. Christison, of Dunleath, had the good-nature to observe, and the hardihood to mention, this desideratum, having found Lady Raymond climbing up to rest on the huge damask-curtained bed, in the middle of the day.

"A sofa! What would she want with a sofa?" exclaimed Lady Macfarren. "If folks are well, let them sit up; and if they're sick, *let them undress*, go to bed, and send for the *doctor: that's my maxim*. Rare fine-lady doings! if every woman in the house were to be crouched up in her bed-room on a sofa, like a hare in its form. Is any thing the matter? If there is, send for Dr. M'Nab. If there ain't, don't talk nonsense about sofas. There's one in the drawing-room, and she's welcome to lie there, if she likes."

On another occasion, a prodigious altercation (or rather monologue, since the loud angry voice of Lady Macfarren was only responded to by a chorus of low sobs) took place in the corridor of an upper story where the servants slept, which the hostess was visiting on a police inspection, to see that all was right. The ayah was crouched on the ground, weeping and terrified. Lady Macfarren was pointing sternly to the place where she sat. She said she "would not have it—would not allow it."

"Out with all those pots and pans! I never saw such heathen nonsense in all my life! If the creature can't eat plain wholesome food like the rest of the servants, she's welcome to starve, for me, till she's learned better. Take them away—take them all away—and let me hear no more of it."

Then Eleanor comprehended the cause of the tumult: the ayah was a Hindoo, and as one of the tenets of their religion is not to eat in vessels that have been used by those who profess a different faith, she had always cooked her little rice messes in the "pots and pans" now so unceremoniously carried off. Eleanor looked compassionately down on her nurse.

"Never mind; I will buy you others, Maya; you shall have new ones," said she.

Fierce and scornful was the laugh with which Lady Macfarren greeted this interference.

"You'll buy others? Truly, Lady Penrhyn, you're over young for the management of other people's households. You'll buy others—and pay for them out of *that*, I suppose," and she pointed to the necklace of gold coins which the Hindoo woman wore.

Eleanor did not answer; no one could have guessed if she heard the taunt; she still bent over her nurse, and spoke to her; using Indian terms of endearment she had learned as a child; and when the little Hindoo rose, and went back to her room, she went with her, passing through the group of servants, and mistress, and Tib, as though instead of living people they had been the boughs of trees in a storm.

To *humble* Eleanor was Lady Macfarren's constant endeavor, and Eleanor could not be humbled. She was not afraid of loud words; she was not ashamed of her poverty; she would not understand the meaning of half the taunts that were addressed to her. But one weak point became apparent. The sudden glance at Lady Raymond, when some coarser sneer than usual seemed to include *her* in the systematic warfare, showed that any insult or tormenting speech which might wound her mother, was dreaded by Eleanor. She was, to repeat the elegant expression triumphantly used by Tib, in discussing this matter with with Lady Macfarren, "as thin-skinned as a rabbit," when Lady Raymond was a sufferer; and though Lady Raymond had often comforted herself as to the impossibility of some of the gross speeches being intentional, and innocently observed that

"the worst of living among vulgar people was, that they had no tact, and were always saying just the wrong things"—yet there were occasions when it was impossible to doubt the design to insult. Once, indeed, Lady Raymond, who was a person of weak nerves, and little self-command, was so stung by what was said, that she burst into tears, and exclaimed to her daughter, "I wonder you will allow them to speak to me in that way," and it was with a thrill of mingled exultation and embarrassment, that the gaunt sister-in-law met Eleanor's indignant reproach:

"What have we ever done to you, that you should behave as you do, Lady Macfarren?"

She had touched her at last; she had found the way to wound; that was satisfactory, and the power was not sparingly used.

What had she done? Ay, what? It is a question many a bride might ask, and many a family find difficult to answer: all for want of a little of that mutual indulgence which Lady Margaret Fordyce preached and practiced.

CHAPTER XXII.

LIFE UNDER A NEW ASPECT.

Sir Stephen was angry that things did not "go smoothly," as he expressed it; but he was not grieved; and he was extremely disposed to repent having brought Lady Raymond with her daughter, and not having dispatched her at once, with Sandy, "the odd man," to Penrhyn Castle. Eleanor most ardently desired to leave Glencarrick; but how say to her husband, "Your sister is so disagreeable that I hope you will soon go away?"

At length an opportunity offered of ascertaining what chance there was of such a desirable event. Lady Macfarren (aided and abetted by Tib) had made divers allusions to the increased expenditure of the household during the shooting season, and had freely discussed the cheating of her servants, the trouble of her accounts, and the enormous consumption in her house of lights and fuel, before Eleanor. The unquestioning silence of the young bride would have made it difficult to proceed further, but for Tib's ingenuity. Tib was what is called "very blunt" in manner; she had such a reputation for "speaking her mind," that no one asked if a portion of her thoughts remained unspoken, or were precisely the reverse of what she spoke. It is a very common social illusion, that persons who have the ill-natured courage to say disagreeable things, full of pain and offense, are franker than their neighbors; that they are frank because they are blunt. Tib was a proof of the exact contrary; for Tib was very blunt, and Tib was very sly. So Tib knowing exactly what it was that Lady Macfarren desired to communicate, said with a little snorting laugh, in a blunt off-hand manner,

"I'd wager ye, now, Leddy Penrhyn, that ye know so little o' housekeepin' that ye'd not even be able to tell what addition each indiveedual maks in a family."

"In what way?"

"In the week's bills. Dear me, but ye answer varry innocently!"

"I should not have supposed one person, more or less, made much difference; but I don't know."

"Weel, it's just charmin' to hear your notions, Leddy Penrhyn; but I'm thinking Leddy Macfarren could tell ye a different story. We were lookin' at the bills this mornin', and I obsairved that it was a wonder to me that Leddy Raymond had not thought of some little arrangement for herself, by way of help, ye know."

Eleanor looked at Lady Macfarren. Lady Macfarren colored, and tossed her head; but she answered quickly:

"Miss Christison means, that Lady Raymond might cast her contribution into the common purse."

"I thought—" said Eleanor; but the words "I thought we were here on a visit," choked her, and she paused.

"I know what you thought, but you're quite mistaken. My brother always paid his scot and lot when he came, and we'd our own agreement about it. At first, after my father died, and the place was mine, I thought just to make the exchange, and let him stay here three months, and I'd stay three months at Penrhyn Castle—though that would not have brought things even, for it's cheaper far to feed a woman than it is to feed a man, with wine, and all that—but in the end we thought best to set a fair price; so much a month; so much as a bachelor; so much for a married couple; and tho' indeed I never expected a penniless bride, still less did I expect—"

Here, even Lady Macfarren paused, and the task devolved on Tib of completing the agreeable intimation that she had not expected a third party to arrive, to whom these pecuniary arrangements were utterly unknown, as they appeared to be to Lady Raymond.

"I am sure my mother will be very glad," said Eleanor, "to contribute her share; we were not aware—Sir Stephen never mentioned to me—I am so ignorant in these matters."

"Of course we look to him as regards yourself, Leddy Penrhyn, but not as regards your mother, ye comprehend."

She comprehended. Oh! rough life of dependence, unrolling like a withered scroll! These people, these rich people, were bargaining then, among themselves, for the petty courtesies of life done by their inferiors every day with an ungrudging hospitality. Their guests were to pay for the bread they broke.

Eleanor resolved to ask her husband how long they were to stay at Glencarrick. She resolved more: she resolved to ask him to leave Glencarrick.

Her own home; she had not seen it; but she had a home; she had married for that; for the power and the happiness of preventing her mother from ever feeling the bitter change of circumstances caused by her guardian's fault. She had bartered herself, the whole future of her life, for the shelter of that home—where was it? she would go there; she would take her mother there; to-morrow, if it might be so, if it could be so, she would go to Castle Penrhyn.

If it could be so; but it could not. Sir Stephen listened, with gloomy irritation, to his young wife's pleading. He replied that he always had staid from two to three months at Glencarrick in the shooting season, and he had no notion of shortening his visit for any squab-

bling among the women. He had warned Eleanor to be very submissive to his sister, and if Lady Macfarren was offended or displeased, Eleanor and her mother must apologize. As to Lady Raymond being called upon to pay a certain portion of the housekeeping, he had not thought about it, but he was quite willing to pay her share, if Eleanor wished it; though he had understood from Lieutenant Marsden, that she had a sufficient independence from the legacy of Sir John Raymond which Godfrey had restored by deed. At all events, they must stay at Glencarrick the usual time, and make the best of it. He hoped he should hear no more of any disputes or misunderstandings; and he was sorry to say his sister had already complained to him of the way in which Eleanor answered her. She thought Eleanor haughty: Eleanor must not be haughty. There would be no peace in families if those who ought to knock under, wanted to be uppermost; and he would not encourage it, or he would have to settle disputes all day long. He was sure Godfrey would have advised quite a different line from what Eleanor was pursuing; and, with a smothered oath, Sir Stephen left the room.

It was Eleanor's dressing-room; she rose, and opened the window, and looked out over the blue lake, and purple hills with a feverish shudder; wistfully—wildly—as though liberty lay somewhere beyond the boundary of earth. The day was warm and still; it had that aromatic scent which loads the atmosphere in spots thickly planted with firs; such as embalms the air to the traveler who has come through the wild pass of Glencoe, and rests among the ancient firs of the Black Mount. Her eye wandered over the scenes that were present; and her heart wandered through the scenes of the past. This, then, was David Stuart's country; the land he loved; the land she had so thirsted to see for his sake; the land already familiar to her from many a sketch drawn by his hand. Oh! better to have died, than live to see it under such circumstances. Better to have died on his heart, when its loud beating choked her voice to silence, than live as the bride of another. Sir Stephen! how he coveted to marry her! How little he loved her! And her poor, gentle-hearted mother, who had never consciously said a word to pain living soul, how cruel not to protect her from harshness and insult! The young bride's eyes filled with angry tears, and her cheek flushed, as she leaned out of the casement, and gazed "over the hills, and far away."

There is a picture by Van Holst at Lansdowne House, which resembled Eleanor in that hour. In that picture (which represents Ginevra in Leigh Hunt's story, after her marriage, and while resolving on suicide), the artist has given a most marvelous delineation of woman's scorn, and woman's misery, mingled with something of the wild anxiety of a creature caught in a trap, in whom there lingers the dim instinct of a possible escape.

Old Mrs. Christison happened to be walking on the lawn; she looked up and saw that young, pale, wrathful, despairing face; and watched it for some moments with silent surprise. Mrs. Christison was a kindly woman, and she climbed *the fir staircase, and came puffing into Eleanor's room.*

"My dear," said she, as Eleanor turned her startled head, like a fawn caught in a brake, "I spied ye from below; and I thocht I'd come up, and hae a word or two with ye. Folk here, is camseery folk, na doot; but the De'il himsel', they say, is nae sae bad as he's painted and though Leddy Macfarren's a queer, hard body, she's nae that ill to bide wi'."

Eleanor sighed.

She felt so lone that even Mrs. Christison's sympathy touched her; and she answered gently:

"I was thinking of my mother, Mrs. Christison, and that may have made me look grave."

"'Deed then, Leddy Penrhyn, it's varry creditable to ye, anyhow, to be thinkin' of yere mother" (Tib rarely thought of her); "and it's just the thocht I've got in my mind, for I've been haeing a crack wi' Sandy and yon heathen Indian woman, and they've let me into Leddy Raymond's ways a little; and I'll do what I can to make her a wee bit mair comfortable. And ye'll no mak' a stranger o' *me*, for I'm just wae for ye to my heart's core; and wow, but yere story's a sad one! I knew a' thae Stuarts, and Mrs. Stuart was just a paragon o' women. My heart was lang sair for her, puir body! I'd walk away up from the hoose at Dunleath to the kirk-yard, and look at her grave, and walk back again, wi' as little pleasure in the possession as might be. And a' thae fine young creatures, her sons and daughters, to die off as they did! Ah! my dear, she'd a face as fair as an angel, and as muckle dignity as a crowned queen, and her brood were a' like her. And to my mind the bonniest o' them a' was just Davie; he had na his compare, puir laddie. And I mind weel his coming and pu'ing the weeds frae the place whar his mother used to sit in the sun, and I felt like a thief to hae Dunleath at a', and daredna come forrit (for he didna ken that I was there), but just went and grat within, and watchit him frae the window, till my gudeman cam' and flyt on me, for an auld fule. But ye're young, Leddy Penrhyn, and life's a wheel; and it'll maybe gie a good turn yet. The Lord kens what's best for us. Keep a gude heart, and a strong trust in His mercy; and I'll do any little matter I can for Leddy Raymond, in the way o' comfortin', ye ken."

What Mrs. Christison did, or could do, would not have consoled Eleanor much; her "comfortin'" consisting principally in bringing hot scons, delicate preserves, and fresh eggs, to Lady Raymond's room, and pressing her to eat these dainties long after the intolerably early breakfast hour had passed by; putting a little stool of Berlin worsted-work under the feeble feet of the invalid; and heaping fir-cones on the peat fire. But Lady Raymond was not like Eleanor, and she was so soothed by Mrs. Christison's gossiping and attentions, that when she heard the redoubtable Tib and her mother were going away, she actually lamented, saying that "in Mrs. Christison she lost the one person that made the place tolerable, and that she hoped they would come over from Dunleath to the Castle, and that she and Eleanor would go and see them at Dunleath." To all which Eleanor consented, with a sort of surprised sadness. "The Airle" was invited as a matter of course; and joked Eleanor by telling her he expected she would make his gruel, and warm his slippers

Lady Margaret was to come, when the Lanarks could spare her, and Godfrey and Emma, as soon as their first mourning was over: for Mr. Fordyce was dead—he had never rallied enough from the stroke of paralysis to speak coherently, and gradually sank till life departed.

It was an obscure life, passed in an obscure village; but not the less full of good deeds. The poor wept their gentle-hearted pastor; and Eleanor, as she lamented her early friend, thought of the last day she saw him—the last indulgent wavering smile, when of all that he muttered and murmured, she could only make out that he spoke tenderly of her guilty guardian, as "poor David Stuart!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

ELEANOR'S NEW HOME.

The radiant autumn sun shone fair and glorious, the day Eleanor left Glencarrick for Castle Penryhn. The lake lay like a sapphire, dropped from the crown of some "Monarch of Mountains." The silver birch, the scarlet-berried rowan tree, the stately pine, grouped in friendly neighborhood with the changing foliage of the beech—passed like a dream of beauty before the eyes of the travelers. The bloom of the heather, spread out for miles and miles—the rush of the tumbling, turbid stream, whose banks were blocks of stone, whose shining pools seemed fathomless—the trickling burn that went down the hill-side singing to itself like a child at play—the difficult, toilsome, rough ascent, bringing at the summit a new world of hills and glens, to be passed through and succeeded by what seemed another world still—this moving panorama went on all day. At length the rich light began to fade; the crimson and purple hills dulled to the color of cold iron; and the soft moon rose gently up, a little before the sunset glory was gone, as if waiting to comfort the earth when it should be utterly forsaken!

Eleanor had been almost joyous that day. The sense of deliverance from petty torment; the power of protection for her mother which the possession of a home of her own seemed to promise; the beauty of the scenery; the freshness of the mountain air; all combined to produce a feeling of exhilaration to which her heart had been lately a stranger. She talked and smiled, as Sir Stephen would have given worlds to see her talk and smile a short time since; but now he was gloomy and pre-occupied; his sister had mingled with her farewell, whatever gall she could; words of doubt, bitterness, and warning, rang in his ear; and Eleanor's cheerfulness ran counter to his thought. Something of triumph and tyranny seemed to lurk in it: something of the spirit Lady Macfarren had affected to perceive in Eleanor's eyes that morning, of gladness to set out, as thinking that now the game was all her own. A dim belief in his sister's sneering assurances that he would find he had been "taken in;" that the widow and her daughter knew well enough the crash that was coming, before he proposed; rose and flickered in his mind like a meteor in a swamp, and he watched that lovely smile with dissatisfaction.

For she was his. now; his wife; and the man with passions and no affections was already able to consider his choice more calmly. Beautiful he thought her, as a picture or a statue; and he thought of her with as much romance as the purchasers of such luxuries might do. Had he paid too dearly for the purchase? Had he been cheated?

Other thoughts, other anxieties, in which Eleanor had no share, which had their origin before he knew her, likewise perplexed him; and he was silent and moody, answering her questions shortly, and often leaning back and shutting his eyes as if in sleep. But as they neared Castle Penrhyn the lethargic mood forsook him; he became restless, put the window down and looked out, and sighed often and impatiently.

"Are you bored with the length of the journey?" said the young wife; "it has been so beautiful!"

"Well, it may be so, for those who like traveling: I don't: I desire always to be on foot, instead of cooped up in the carriage;" and he again looked impatiently out.

"Do you love the place much?"

"What place? What do you mean?"

"Penrhyn Castle; are you very, very fond of it?"

Sir Stephen answered crossly. He said he thought it ridiculous to talk of loving a place; that one loved people, not things; that as to the Castle, it was well enough, though not as fine as Lanark's Lodge, and he had many improvements still to make; that he did not know but he preferred the place in Wales, and that he was sorry not to have had Glencarrick, as the shooting was better there. She would soon judge for herself.

When he had said this, he became grave and silent: so did Eleanor; she wondered if she should "love" Castle Penrhyn: she thought of Dunleath.

The carriage stopped at a lofty gateway of stone, fringed with the drooping branches of immense firs. Something stern, solemn, and grand, was in its unadorned and unpretending structure, and the great bell rung like a knell on the evening air. There was a pause; the door of the lodge opened, and then shut again; Sir Stephen looked out with a muttered oath.

"They seem to have forgotten the key," said Eleanor.

"It is some time since I have been here," answered her husband. "I suppose there has been no carriage through for a long while: but we are expected."

He kept his eyes fixed on the lodge, out of which issued at length a beautiful young woman, followed by a handsome robust child of three or four years old, clinging to her gown, and staring at the carriages.

"Now, Bridget; open the gate, and don't keep us all night," said Sir Stephen, in a tone half angry, half familiar.

The order was obeyed; the woman hastily unlocked the gate, swung it open, and then throwing her apron over her face, began to sob aloud. The gate, which had not been opened to the hinge, swung back again on the carriage; the horses plunged, and one of the traces broke. The servant got down to assist the postillion.

"Open the carriage-door: open the door, I say," shouted Sir Stephen, in a tone of fury.

He got out of the carriage, and seizing the young woman by the arm, spoke to her; first, apparently, in the way of menace; then arguing with her; then, as she continued to sob without answering, he released her arm, and laid his hand as if soothingly upon it; but no sooner was she freed from his detaining grasp, than she turned and ran, still weeping loudly, along the path and up the steps, into the lodge, the door of which she shut violently, and locked on the inside.

The little child who had accompanied her, stood in the road; his glance wandering from the lodge to the intruders. Sir Stephen passed him on his way to the carriage; stopped, and taking half-a-crown from his purse, put it in his hand, bidding him tell his mother Sir Stephen would speak with her in the morning.

"An ye gar mammy greet," said the little urchin; "I'll no tak ye're bonny big saxpence," and he flung it under the horse's feet, and shrank sullenly away.

Then he retreated slowly to the door of the lodge, stopping now and then to eye the party in the road. He leaned his curly head against the door, but apparently made no plea for admittance. They saw him stand there in the evening light, like a little shaggy peasant by Gainsborough: and an artist would have been glad of the sight; for the light was lovely, and so was the child.

Sir Stephen came back with a slow, heavy step to the carriage. The trace was mended sufficiently to drive the brief remainder of the journey; the confusion was over; they could now proceed. He took his seat by Eleanor's side.

"Oh!" said she, eagerly, "do not let us go on without saying something more to that poor soul. What is the matter? What ails her? She is in some distress. What did you say to her? Let me get out, and speak to her; it seems so cruel to drive on without further notice. Let me get out; you don't know how much wiser we women are in comforting than you men."

She smiled as she spoke, and made a movement, as if to leave the carriage. A burst of the wildest execration, a torrent of mad, furious oaths, escaped Sir Stephen.

"I think," said he still choking with passion, "that women are the d—dest fools in creation. It is not enough to be pestered by Bridget, who stands sobbing and shrieking before all the servants, but you must mix yourself up with it too, and make another scene. Let her come to her senses alone; *your* meddling won't mend matters. I've told her I'll see her in the morning, and d—n me, if I encourage this sort of thing by seeing her a minute sooner."

He paused; Eleanor was very pale.

"Well now, I dare say I've frightened you," said he, with an awkward change of manner. "I'm sorry I swore; I beg pardon; you're not angry, I hope?" and he took her hand.

He pressed her hand; he kissed her; he pressed her in his arms.

"You look so pale, Eleanor; you know I can't bear to see you look in that way. It reminds me—" he paused; and merely added, *"never mind my* swearing; it's a habit, you *know; many a fellow* swears worse than I do; I'll break myself of it. I'm sorry I frightened you."

Eleanor was not frightened; she was not angry; she was only very sick and faint. Her look reminded him of a day he remembered well; the day she fainted in his arms at Aspendale; the day he feared she might not live to be his wedded wife. And over her shrinking soul the same shadow was passing now, that clouded it then. The same horror and repugnance of his strength and his violence; the same vague contrasting of the calm happy past with the stormy present; of gentle looks, and words, and tones, with her new life. Her hand was in his; her wedding-ring on her finger; she had lived to be his wife, and she was not angry. Yet Sir Stephen's irritation increased; he would have preferred that she should have remonstrated with him. He felt, however dimly, that between her soul and his, there lay "a great gulf."

He told Eleanor that the woman at the lodge, Bridget Owen, was the daughter of one of his Welsh tenants; that her husband had been transported for sheep-stealing, and that he had allowed her to leave Wales, and had given her the Lodge at the Castle, to provide her with a home away from former associations, and companions who might reproach her with her husband's disgrace. He said she was a wild-tempered, odd young woman, that his agent had already written to him to remove her, but he did not exactly know what to do with her.

Eleanor's gentle heart listened compassionately to this unhappy story, and early next morning, she walked to the Lodge, with the wish and intention of speaking comforting words. They were received but coldly. When Eleanor alluded to the disgrace of the husband, and the possibility of his return, after his probationary exile, a reformed man; a stare of angry amazement and a short, sullen laugh, were all the reply she elicited. She attempted to touch Bridget, by allusion to the duty of bearing cheerfully for her child's sake; but the woman's eye grew deeper in its gloom, as she drew the child from Eleanor's hand, saying:

"Let my boy be. He and I'll trouble no one; husband or no husband."

She was impracticable. Often, as Eleanor passed the gate in the fresh mornings or the pleasant evenings, she was checked in her pity by the expression of that young, handsome face; savage, sullen, and yet delicate, like a gipsy's. The child would come down the path with the key, and take it back again without a smile, without an answer to Eleanor's greeting; a rough miniature copy of his mother; bold, wild, but never merry or caressing as children are wont to be. His dark glittering eyes haunted Eleanor. He looked, she thought, like the child of a transported felon; as Sir Stephen had said he was—but Sir Stephen lied in that matter.

Penrhyn Castle was lone, and gray, and gaunt; Sir Stephen was violent and capricious; Lady Raymond low-spirited and ill; and Eleanor relapsed into dejection. When Tib came on a visit, she found, in the blotting-book of her room, a copy of verses which had been forgotten there. For Tib liked to meet fine people, and she wrote to offer a visit, as soon as she found the Lanarks, and Lady Margaret, and the Airle were expected; and Emma and her children

ing about the same time, the house was near-
ll; so Eleanor ceded for Tib's use, a little,
y spare room, looking on the garden, which
alled the bower-room, and where she used
aw and paint and write; one of those cheery
s, which people who have large fine houses
ys seem to select, as if to prove that grand-
s incompatible with comfort. Tib ferret-
out, in the sunny room that had so evident-
en occupied, and she found, as I have said,
tfolio, that had been overlooked in arrang-
he apartment for her reception. Tib was
a squirrel with a nut, when she had found
ortfolio; and she hastily devoured the con-
, hoping to discover some little secret; or
wise profit by the *trouvaille*.

first her trouble was scarcely repaid; for
ontents of the book seemed very uninterest-
scraps of sketches; patterns for arbors,
rellis-work; designs for cottages; ditto for
w school-house, on which was penciled in
aret's hand-writing, "you've forgotten to
a staircase, is the schoolmaster to climb into
oom on a ladder?" Rules for a general
e oven, where on payment of a weekly
ription the poor might bake (at which Tib
ied her snorting laugh, she thought the idea
licrous), and other matters of the same kind.
t last there was a sheet of scribbled writ-
and though it was a great disappointment
d it was not a letter containing Eleanor's
te sentiments to some one, but only a copy
rses, still, on an attentive perusal, they
repaid Tib for her trouble, for they cer-
seemed to have reference to young Lady
yn herself.

e verses were headed "Aspendale," and
remembered that Aspendale Park was the
of the place where the bride had passed
hildhood. Oho! quoth Tib.

"ASPENDALE.

e of my youth! within whose tranquil shades
wandered hand in hand with joy and love;
the wind wafted, through the light-stemmed trees,
istant murmurs of the woodland dove:
ıks I feel as though some magic bark
orne me from thee, in an hour of gloom;
ver darkest seas, impelled by storms,
ift me, trembling to a shipwrecked doom!
ıg rough billows of an unknown sea,
ceaseless, on a bare and barren strand,
and find no boundary but rocks,
ll the people rugged as the land!

y of my life; I long to hide
angry looks, from discord, doubt, and pain,
rawling riot of embittered words;
ruggle to avoid reproach, in vain.
sefess is the torment of the time,
l the weight by which I am opprest,
d and hopeless of a better change—
ı no more for happiness—but rest!

that some angel from serener worlds,
white calm feet, and floating moveless wings,
rd—its solemn presence only known
oft halo on surrounding things—
l come at midnight; summoning my soul
ve the jarring tumult of the earth,
sks excused, I feel too weak to bear;
ars cut off, assigned me at my birth:
fting me from Life's rough path of thorns,
aning night—its wild and perilous day—
wide the undreaded gates of solemn Death,
), to peace and silence lead the way!"

› was not particularly fond of poetry, but
ad and pondered over these verses; and
owed them to Lady Macfarren. And Tib
gave it as her opinion that young Lady Penrhyn was a "deceitful, whining little toad;" and Lady Macfarren said she had no patience with such sickly sentimentality about nothing at all; when people had all the comforts of life round them, and every luxury that money could buy.

Things grew brighter when Lady Margaret came. Where did she ever come, that things did not seem the brighter? She was pained by the mood in which she found Eleanor, and questioned her closely; nor did Eleanor refuse her confidence to the friend who had been with her in such trying times. Lady Margaret was grieved: and she was also surprised. She was innocent-hearted enough to feel perplexed, at this love and no love; this earnest courtship on the part of a bridegroom, who swore at and quarreled with his bride. Sir Stephen had seemed so passionately attached to Eleanor!

Lady Margaret sighed as she listened; and expressed regret for having advised the marriage; and then she spoke a few simple sentences, which every bride would do well to remember and treasure up.

"My dear Eleanor," she said, "the die is cast; whatever this man's faults, or the faults of his relatives may be, from him and from them you can not now disentangle yourself. It behoves you therefore, to bear with them. It would be expedient to do this, even were it not your duty, but it *is* your duty. Many things are expedient more or less, in this life: there is a choice of many paths: but there is but one right, and one wrong. What it is right to do, is always clear: how it will answer to do right, is in God's hands. Take as your motto, my Eleanor, the old French device, '*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.*' Be cheerful; be patient; look forward, do not look back. Do not take life's trials as prepared for you by God's creatures, but by God himself. Then there will be in your heart neither resentment, resistance nor despondency; for the sense of an overruling Providence will support you when you would faint, and control you when you would rebel."

No doubt this was better for Eleanor, than if she had been told that her husband was a brute, and that with her beauty and accomplishments she deserved a better fate. No doubt the house was pleasanter than if all its inmates had been drawn up in battle array, and indulged in perpetual skirmishes. Tib was spiteful, but every one else was so good-humored, that Tib was nearly neutralized. The Duchess of Lanark played the harp with her beautiful white hands and arms, and looked up to the ceiling with her soft large eyes, every evening, to the delight and wonderment of the young sportsmen who had come for a week's shooting to the Castle. The Airle was so jocular and inclined to romp, when the time for music was over and the reels began, that Tib actually once told him with much virgin majesty, not to "forget himself." Even Lady Macfarren softened in so much good company; for it is the peculiar idiosyncrasy of those who bully persons they deem beneath them, that they invariably cringe to persons above them.

Expeditions were made to objects of interest in the neighborhood, and one expedition caused Eleanor's heart to beat and flutter, for it was made to Dunleath. What a merry party it

seemed to all but Eleanor and Margaret! What a number of horses and carriages assembled at the gate of that lovely place, and stood inside the avenue, while the party lunched and walked through the grounds. What a loaded, hospitable, showy luncheon, good old Mrs. Christison had provided! What desecrating tidiness there was about the place; what red graveled walks, and white scoured statues, and clipped laurel hedges! Dunleath was only saved from assuming the trim air of a citizen's box at Highgate, by the indestructible beauty of its scenery. The very sun-dial was scraped and cleaned and chipped, and the letters re-engraved—as though the hand of man could scrape away the shadow of all the past hours forever and ever, and begin on a fresh score.

The sun-dial! how fondly and tearfully Eleanor looked at it; how easily her fancy conjured up the beautiful and noble-hearted Mrs. Stuart, sitting there; teaching her children, musing on her husband's reckless extravagance, hoping, contriving, enduring. How the solemn firs seemed to keep her memory; those great rough trees that could not be pared and pruned and decorated, to suit the taste of the present occupants; but with stiff branches which the winter's wind swayed not when it came, and brown coppered stems, that gleamed like brass in the autumn sun, stood changeless and stern, amid the attempts, as Mrs. Christison termed it, to "set a' to rights."

Oh, lovely Dunleath! how could you wear that air of trim neatness and vulgar gayety? Were not the reckless laird and his noble wife lying in the cold kirkyard hard by? Did not that true-hearted woman strive in vain to keep you for her son? Did not David Stuart peril and lose fame and life for your sake, senseless Dunleath?

Eleanor wandered away to the group of firs, and sat down there. She was followed by Tib's suitor, young Mr. Malcolm, who seated himself by her side; stretching his long melancholy legs from under his kilt, with a sort of telescopic extension.

"Eh!" said he with a sigh, "eh! Leddy Penrhyn, it's just a pairfect place, is it not? and she's a pairfect creature—Miss Tibb! A man might be pairfectly happy at Dunleath, mem! I'd never wish to go further. Do' ye no think it, Leddy Penrhyn?"

And Eleanor said yes; she thought Dunleath a lovely place. For she heard him enough to be conscious she was spoken to; enough to give an intelligible reply; though she was dreaming of the days, when safe and happy, and unmarried, she sate by her guardian's side on the rocks of the roaring Linn!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE NEW HOPE.

But joy dawned over the waste of Eleanor's life, like the sun on a dreary landscape. Castle Penrhyn was gilded with glory. An heir was born: she was the mother of twin sons: safe, well, and the mother of twin sons, in spite of prophecies over which the nurses and old crones *of the village* had held many discussions, that there should "never again be an heir in the direct line."

There they were, dear children, in that cradle radiant with future hope; and they grew and prospered exceedingly. Prospered not equally: Frederick, the younger, was strong, blooming and lovely; and Clephane, the elder, was pale and feeble. Mothers will know (if there was any difference in her love) which Eleanor preferred. The one that was not beautiful—the one that was not strong—the one that being less to others, was more to her. Dear to her very soul, were those soft wistful intelligent eyes, the clasp of those little slender fingers, the tones of that timid voice; dearer (if possible) than the rosy beauty of the father's favorite; the roguish joyous, rebellious, coaxing Fred.

Children! they are a sacred happiness. Their place in our hearts is marked out in every page of Holy writ. By the mouth of a child, God reproved and doomed His High Priest; when the great house of Eli was to fall, and Hophni and Phineas to die, "both in one day." By the example of a child, Christ warned and exhorted his disciples, when they would have forbidden the company of those little ones, as intrusive and trivial in the Great Presence.

Nearer to glory they stand than we, in this world and the next! It was a gentle and not unholy fancy that made the Portuguese artist Siquiera, in one of his sweet pictures, form of millions of infant faces the floor of Heaven; dividing it thus from the fiery vault beneath, with its groups of the damned and lost. For how many women has this image been realized! How many have been saved from despair or sin by the voice and smile of these unconscious little ones? The woman who is a mother, dwells in the immediate presence of guardian angels. She will bear on for her children's sake. She will toil for them—die for them—*live* for them—which is sometimes harder still. The neglected, miserable, maltreated wife, had still one bright spot in her home: in that darkness a watch-light burns: she has her children's love, she will strive for her children. The woman tempted by passion, has still one safeguard stronger than all with which you would surround her; she will not leave her children. The angry and outraged woman sees in those tiny features a pleading more eloquent than words; her wrath against her husband melts in the sunshine of their eyes. Idiots are they, who in family quarrels seek to punish the mother by parting her from her offspring; for in that blasphemy against nature they do violence to God's own decrees, and lift away from her heart the consecrated instruments of His power.

The fact that there are careless and unnatural mothers does not destroy the argument. So there are men who are murderers; children who are monsters; Nature makes exceptions to all her great unswerving rules; but rules they will remain to the end of time. And among them, none more general, more mighty, more unfailing, than the love of a mother for her child!

Eleanor loved her children with all the strength of her soul. Her trials and troubles and irritations seemed nothing, when balanced with this new joy. She did not know, she had not imagined, so much happiness remained upon earth.

Even the thought of David Stuart, though it departed not, receded; fading into the mournful past. Memory gave place to hope. The lovely lines of Tennyson were realized for that early sorrow, as in his poem for the early love:

"Baby fingers, waxen touches,
Pressed it from the mother's heart."

She wept no more, she pined no more, her heart severed no more in hours of solitude, over vague and vain imaginings of what "might have been." The tangible and real delight sufficed her. Her eyes, which had opened so sadly to the light of each recurring morn, woke with a sense of glad thanksgiving, and closed with a happy prayer for blessings on those darling heads. Castle Penrhyn no longer seemed so gray and gaunt; the voices of little children were heard up and down the great grim house like the chirping of birds among boughs; the quick patter of their merry feet running along the corridors, put a thrill of life into the old silence.

And they loved Eleanor! With what a miracle of speed the quick years flew away, which changed those unconscious infants into loving children; little friends; anxious when she was ill; sorry if she were vexed; learning to please her; able to discourse with her of what pleased them! How strange was the difference between them; and how absorbing the interest she felt, in watching that difference and training both those dawning minds.

How bewitching was Frederick, with his sweet merry temper, his jokes, his coaxing and disarming fondness; his generosity and self-denial in the miniature trials of a child's life, his courage, his easy love that warmly responded to the smallest kindness; his dear foolish trust in all the little world he saw; and his wonderful beauty which made even strangers pause to notice him, and ask his name.

How attaching was her shy, pale Clephane, whom strangers never noticed (except with a secret doubt of his mother being able to rear him) but whose worth the mother knew. His piety and good sense; his quick ability; his patience in pain and sickness; his unwillingness to give trouble; his desire to serve; his companionableness, so far beyond what is supposed possible in a child; his quick perception of what vexed her; his fond unjealous admiration of his brother; his humbling unquestioning acceptance of his own position toward his father, as something less loving, strong, and attractive, and therefore less to be valued than Frederick. All, made Eleanor's heart yearn to him in secret, as every mother's heart will yearn to feebleness or defect; as the bird spreads her cherishing wings over her nestlings, because they are callow and cold.

And little Clephane's love for his mother was a sort of fervent adoration. No one else cared for him; but he had an instinct that her great love for him outsummed all he could hope from others. Often had the golden link been nearly broken. Often had his mother sate through the long nights and heavy days, a patient sentinel, guarding that life so dear to her with the shadow of Death for her fellow-watcher. And blooming Frederick would break away from his nurse as he went up-stairs from his walk, and come in, a little too suddenly perhaps for a sick room—fresh as a rose; his bright eyes full of love and eagerness; his long brown hair disheveled by the wind; and clasping his healthy little arms round his brother's neck, adjure him to get well—to "get well, and come out; it *is* so pleasant out of doors!" And Sir Stephen would come in, and stand gazing for a few minutes at the little invalid, with feelings half of pity and half of discontent. He thought if Eleanor managed better, the boy would surely be stronger. He had never seen illness; he could not comprehend it. His sister had always been robust; he himself was a Hercules. There were moments when he experienced a sort of disgust and impatience to the ailing child, who was never well enough to follow him as Frederick did. He tried to take him, once or twice; but once Clephane sate meekly down after a while, saying:

"I'll wait for your turning back, papa, on this big stone."

And once he had to return with him, and carry him part of the way; so Sir Stephen bid the child for the future "keep with his mother," and contented himself with the company of the stronger twin, who skipped after him like a little kid, and already showed an idolatrous admiration for his father's prowess in field sports.

"Come and see the stag papa has killed, Clephane; only come and see; such a big fellow that papa has shot down! When I'm big, I'll kill the stags. Come and sit upon his back; papa, put me on his back. He's got such horns! you never saw such horns! Come!"

And hand-in-hand the twins would go; till Clephane shrank back a little, awed and sick, from the dead stately prey. And Sir Stephen, giving Frederick an exulting swing in the air and catching him in his strong arms, would pronounce him "his own fine boy—his own king of men." And Sir Stephen spoke truth, when he said that he never was so fond of mortal thing, as he was of his boy Frederick.

So the children grew and prospered, and were taught and trained, and loved and cherished; and the Welsh tenantry knew that an heir was born to inherit the land they dwelt on; and the Highland tenantry saw the boys from time to time, and drank their health at tenant dinners; and once were elated to a pitch of intense enthusiasm by little Frederick standing on the table to answer the toast by his father's desire; while Clephane sate smiling by. A roar of approbation followed the hesitating sentence spoken by the healthy, handsome, blushing and yet bold little child; a roar of approbation, and then his health was drunk as "the heir." Sir Stephen rectified the mistake, and the eyes of the rough assembly fell with some disappointment on Clephane. Children are quick in feeling; quicker than grown people believe. Clephane sighed and colored; his neighbor happened to be Tib's lank suitor, Mr. Malcolm. He put one of his long arms round the boy, and said kindly:

"Tak' heart mon; I was but a puir bit wean mysel', and see noo what a mon I grew. Maybe ye'll be sich another."

Which caused little Clephane to laugh; for even to him, Mr. Malcolm seemed any thing but the beau-ideal of what he desired to become; but he felt the kindness, and spoke of it to his mother when he went home; and gaunt Mr.

Malcolm might have been quite puzzled, if a gipsy had told him that a beautiful lady thought kindly of him that night before she went to sleep, assuring him at the same time that it was not Tib.

Lady Margaret was almost as glad as Eleanor when the twins were born; and Eleanor sent her some verses she wrote while they were still little things. Verses, not forgotten in her blotting-book, to be ferreted out by Tib, like those she wrote in her days of despondency, but copied cheerfully in a letter to her friend. And when that best of friends came to see her and the children, she bent over the bed where they lay and tenderly repeated the last two lines, gently kissing the little sleepers; after which she also kissed Eleanor, "as a reward," said she, laughingly, "for having made the verses." And though bright Margaret spoke in jest, I do not see why a kiss from her pure true mouth should not be as good a reward for a copy of verses, as compliments from kings, or the kiss a queen once bestowed on ugly Alain Chartier; on which occasion the amazed ladies of honor were assured, that her majesty kissed him "not as a man, but as an author."

But Eleanor needed no reward; not even Margaret's kiss: the subject of her verses lay smiling before her, and that was enough.

"THE BIRDIE'S SONG.

"As I came o'er the distant hills,
I heard a wee bird sing:
'O, pleasant are the primrose buds
In the perfumed breath of spring!
And pleasant are the mossy banks,
Beneath the birchen bowers,—
But a home wherein no children play,
Is a garden shorn of flowers!'

"And once again I heard the bird,
His song was loud and clear:
'How glorious are the leafy woods
In the summer of the year!
All clothed in green, the lovely boughs
Spread wide o'er land and lea.—
But the home wherein no son is born,
Is a land without a tree!'

'The birdie ceased its happy song,
I heard its notes no more;
The water rippled silently
To the blue lake's quiet shore:
But a mother sang her cradle hymn:
'All hallowed be your rest,
And angels watch the shining heads
That leaned on Jesu's breast!'"

CHAPTER XXV.

LONDON.

Eleanor, and her little sons, and Lady Raymond, did not, however, always remain in their Highland retirement. Glencarrick and Castle Penrhyn claimed them in the autumn of the year; but Sir Stephen was member for a county, and, except the first year of her marriage, and the year she was ill of a fever, Eleanor had always been in London during the parliamentary season. She lived in that circle which those who compose it call the great world, and which, numerically, is a little world; for after you have been in London for two or three seasons, you begin to know almost every one in it. Eleanor did not like the great world a bit better now than when she first came out as a young lady *with Margaret as her* chaperon; but she liked the power of receiving a pleasant circle at her own house, and she saw a great deal of the Duke and Duchess of Lanark and Lady Margaret. Less of the duke than of the duchess, for he was greatly occupied with politics and little at home. But Eleanor grew to like the duchess, and to see what was valuable in her. There is something valuable in all persons, if we would look for that instead of their faults.

Her frivolity seemed less, where all were more or less frivolously occupied; her kindliness greater, where so few were kindly, so many much the reverse; her vanity pardonable, in the flood of flattery which greeted her. She was not bound to test it, and find what would remain if her real merits stood clear from the influence of acquired advantages of rank and position. She scorned no one. She was bitter to no one. She was a little jealous of Margaret's fondness for Eleanor, but she was gentle and kind, nevertheless: and to Eleanor, gentleness was ever a charm—a charm to which the stiff fierceness of Lady Macfarren, the shrewd spite of Tib, and the violence of Sir Stephen, stood out as habitual foils.

Politics, which occupied Sir Stephen and absorbed the Duke of Lanark, had no charm for young Lady Penrhyn. At best it appeared to be a sort of surgical profession; painful, tedious, often revolting, the operations necessary to amend the diseased condition of society. Perhaps she stood too near the great forge of government to judge calmly. She saw too much of the machinery, for one who so imperfectly comprehended the results; the black oily wheels; the suffocating atmosphere; the ceaseless din; the weary labor; these she saw; but not the pattern of gorgeous tapestry on which History was weaving a further measure of events. She saw many sudden conversions; much toad-eating and fawning; apparent breaches of faith, defended by the eloquent, pardoned by the good; friendships broken, friends supplanted, chiefs deserted; men who were once the stars of a circle, forgotten and neglected, flung aside like blunt tools no longer capable of work. She saw some whose hands could once have lifted the aspirant, trampled on as a stepping-stone to power; and some who once craftily sued, become haughtily tyrannical. She saw, with amazed eyes, the little faults of great men; the little hinges on which great interests turn. She thought of her father's weary, struggling life, as David Stuart had described it to her, and wondered if men of equal talent and earnestness were toiling still, as thanklessly, in the service of the public and of their party.

To Margaret these matters wore a brighter aspect. From childhood she had lived in society where they formed the constant theme of discussion. Her beloved brother's talents were exerted in that line: she looked forward to seeing him in power. He had formed her opinions; and his "peerless Margaret" was proud of comprehending what he taught her. To Margaret, political life was a stirring and glorious career.

The same difference of thought existed between the two friends in the lighter currents of Eleanor's new world of fashion. It requires really to belong to that strange world—to be brought up among that particular set, and so

get the senses gradually blunted to the frivolity, pomposity, soul-deep (not manner-deep) vulgarity, and the wonderful profligacy of opinion which is combined with outward formalities, to be able to watch it all calmly. A full-grown human being, dropped suddenly into the turmoil of what is called the great world, is apt to become sobered and saddened, if not disgusted, and to go home feeling depressed and dusty, like one who has taken a long unsatisfactory walk.

All her life long, Lady Margaret had lived in this land of the Bore-ians: she was accustomed to them. She was not traveling, like Eleanor, through a new country, where every thing was salient, novel, and peculiar. And though she felt some differences in her own heart, the experience rather enabled her to choose at once the companions most genial, cordial, and real, than taught her to pause over the faults of others.

Eleanor was always comparing the people she saw, with her own ideal of men and things. She was like a child seeing fantoccini for the first time: Margaret had seen the fantoccini dancing all her life. Eleanor fell into the great and grievous mistake of supposing people who seemed all so much alike in manner, in pursuits, in conversational topics and conventional decorums, must be alike in heart and soul: Margaret knew that the uniform worn by the fashionable corps, no more compelled nature than the soldier's uniform annuls the variety of disposition or levels the worthy and unworthy in a regiment; that in the same crowd where she saw those she could not but despise, she also saw those she respected from her soul; and that the worth of the latter did not rub off like the bloom of the plum, in the process of shaking hands with the former.

The duke came into the breakfast-room one morning, and found Eleanor reading the paper.

"What an improvement, Lady Penrhyn! I really believe you are studying the debates, at last!"

"Do not hope it," said Margaret, laughing; "I am sure Eleanor was reading either a murder, or a charity case; and she was thinking of the 'Times,' and the 'Times' Commissioner, as two mysterious beings, who go about spying into abuses in disguise—like Caliph Haroun Alraschid and his Vizier. Confess, Eleanor, is not that your notion?"

"That the 'Times' Commissioner goes about with a turban on, and an aigrette of jewels in it—no: but that the power of the press is a very wonderful power, much more wonderful than that of the Caliph in the 'Arabian Tales'—yes."

"And quite as liable to abuse."

"I doubt," said the duke, "whether any power exists, equally great, and equally irresponsible, that is so little abused as the press of England. The complaints made of it from time to time, tend rather to show the confidence the public has in its general impartiality, and the high expectations formed of the line expected to be pursued by these exponents of popular opinion, than to condemn it. No general of an army, no admiral of a fleet, has so much irresponsible power as the editor of one of the great London journals; with less responsible control, for he has this difficulty to contend with, that his men are not bound to his opinions; he can't shoot one as a deserter, or hang up another to the yard-arm for going over to the enemy. Nor can we (fortunately) shoot our editors as we did Admiral Byng, for defect of judgment in fighting our battles. The editor fights them as he pleases: we can neither reward nor degrade him; and for my part I think, when we consider the multitude of minds employed, the variety of contending interests involved, and the rapidity of decision with which all this has to be sifted and arranged; we should rather marvel at the ability with which the task is executed, than dwell on occasional fallibility of judgment, or perverted intentions. Any one would suppose by the magnificent idea of unswerving justice and perfection we attach to the idea of an editor, that we believed the leading journals of the day to be conducted by the archangels Gabriel and Michael, instead of men liable to the same prejudices, passions, and errors with ourselves; though probably possessed of thrice our ability, and four times our industry in turning that ability to account."

"What I was thinking of," said Eleanor, "was a power apart from political discussion, the simple power of publication. How many wrongs have been redressed, that never would even have been known, without the aid of the press? It is the speaking-trumpet of the poor, by which they can hail those classes at a distance from them. That alone is a glorious power."

"Yes; and even that is often misjudged; for I have seen it gravely argued by our continental neighbors (who are apt to see great moral questions in an inverted point of view), that our neglect of the laboring classes is proved, by our publications of inquiries into their condition. Happy the people whose rights are fought out in the columns of the daily papers, instead of among the stones of the barricades! Happy the people who are taught to look upon gradation as God's law, not man's oppression; and who appeal to the classes that have wealth and leisure, for aid—not for equality!"

"And happy the people who find the most fervent upholders of their rights among those very classes; is not that the last clause of the speech, Lanark?" said Margaret, fondly; and she looked in her brother's countenance while she spoke.

He smiled in answer, and then said,

"I came to tell you a great piece of news, which indeed you ought to have known last night, but that you were all gone to bed when I came in. There is a change of ministry, and I have accepted my share of the trouble of the day. I am to be First Lord of the Admiralty I see you are speechless with triumph already, Margaret. I am twice the man, in your feminine eyes, that I was yesterday, now that I am in office. But I must be very busy, so good-by."

"Now, can you tell why you also should be nearly as glad as I am?" said Margaret, as her eyes returned from following her brother to the door of the breakfast-room.

"Can any thing be indifferent to me which makes your cheek flush, and your eyes sparkle so? Can any thing be little to me, which is so much to you all? Of course, I am glad—so glad, dear Margaret."

"You heard Lanark say he was to be First Lord of the Admiralty?"

"Yes; I was surprised; I did not know he had been in the navy."

"Neither has he been in the navy, you poor little ignoramus. The First Lord of the Admiralty need not be in the navy, any more than the Secretary at War need be in the army, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer a banker; but do you see how his being First Lord especially interests you?"

"Me! No."

"Do you know one Lieutenant Marsden, now on shore; very anxious to get a ship, very restless, and very discontented?"

"Oh! dearest Margaret," said Eleanor, clasping her hands with sudden seriousness, "if the duke would indeed be so good; if, in consideration of my disastrous story, and Godfrey's real generosity at the time, though it was hardly, sternly done—he would do us this great service."

"Softly, softly, my Eleanor. You that were so innocent a minute ago, and now propose, in the most barefaced manner, a regular job. 'In consideration of your story, and Godfrey's generosity,' indeed! That would never do. No: in consideration of the merits of this excellent young officer, who has been miraculously overlooked; who lost three fingers boarding a slave-cutter, and passed five years on the fatal coast of Sierra Leone."

"Oh, never, Margaret."

"Well, my dear, I don't say precisely those claims; but some claims a man must advance. I shall mention the three fingers, and the coast of Sierra Leone."

"No, no," said Eleanor, laughing.

"And I shall add, that he was a step-son of General Sir John Raymond, whose services in India speak for themselves."

"Ah! my poor father! That is true; though they say your political party, Margaret, are more famous for trying to conciliate their foes, than for rewarding their old friends; still less the relations of old friends, and of friends who are dead and gone, and can serve them no longer."

"You will make a poor petitioner, Eleanor, if you are so bitter. It is well I am to coax Lanark out of a ship, instead of you. Canning's 'needy knife-grinder,' who would not feel his wrongs, is the right model for the politically-neglected."

"Am I bitter? Well, it is only when I think of my father; how his life was worn out of him in its very meridian, by thankless friends, grumbling at home at the difficulty of passing their half-digested measures abroad; no one helping, or caring for him. But I will not talk of it any more. Get a ship for Godfrey, Margaret. You will see I can thank, better than I can petition."

Meanwhile, Godfrey and Emma were invited to stay with Eleanor in town; and as ships are not obtained, commissioned, given away, and sent to foreign stations in a day; some little delay intervened, before the petition so easily settled between the two fair friends, could be even considered. Then there were a number of previous just claims. Then there was another opportunity of which Margaret *and Eleanor* had made very sure, and which, I regret to say, I really think the duke ought to have made the occasion of Godfrey's advancement; but his duchess took a fit of extreme jealousy and displeasure at Margaret's interference; her large eyes had such an ill-used expression while she played the harp, and her answers were so peevish, that sundry explanations resulted with the duke; and eventually a *protégé* of hers, a cousin she had never cared about, and whom she never would have cared to see promoted, but for the sake of proving her own influence, was appointed instead of Godfrey. The duke looked a little confused when he answered Margaret's glad interrogation—"Well, I suppose Godfrey is to have the 'Niobe?'" by the announcement that it was promised to Capt. Wallace; and Margaret looked surprised; but after a moment's thought she kissed her brother's cheek, and said, "Well; we must look forward." And that evening, when the duchess had played through the last rapid variation of an air which ought never to have had variations composed on it, for it was the mournful "Farewell to Lochaber," Margaret said, gently,

"I wish you would exert your influence with Lanark, in a matter which Eleanor has much at heart; and that is, getting Godfrey named to a ship. His claims are real enough, but in his over-crowded profession, it is a chance when a man gets them considered, if he has no one to speak for him."

The duchess smiled, and said she would be glad to do any thing for Eleanor. Her opposition was withdrawn; she had been petitioned too! The next opportunity, however, was given away to the son of a political supporter; it was "advisable" to do this, and the duke had to consider what was advisable. The next, to the brother of a political opponent; there was some grumbling about that, but it passed, and being successful, was considered an excellent bold stroke; the next chance was swallowed up in one of those arrangements sometimes made in high quarters, the preliminaries of which had been arranged before the duke held office. Some great man's nephew was a lawyer, and the chancellor was to do something for him, on condition a certain young captain had something done for him. It was now the young captain's turn. So Godfrey waited for his opportunity; though he had what is called "such good interest;" and while he waited he staid with Eleanor, and saw a little of "the great world."

And Godfrey took care neither to feel, nor to show, the smallest gratitude to any one concerned in the exertions now making to serve him. He considered Eleanor to be doing no more than her duty in being mindful of his interests, and that his claims had hitherto been most unduly overlooked. He did not scruple to sneer at and criticise the conduct of public men in general, and the party in power in particular, even in presence of the duke. He also declared that if he had the world to begin again, he would not enter a profession where a fellow might be knocked about all his life, without better reward than seeing other men who hadn't served half the time put over his head; and on the duke reminding him, with a frank, good-humored smile, that he at least was still comparatively young, he replied dictatorially, that the Board of Admiralty was very apt to tell a

man he was "too young" for promotion, until the time came when they could tell him that he was "too old." And Lady Raymond sighed, and said that was but too true; and pressed her son's hand as if it were the hand of a martyr.

And the duke told Margaret privately, that her friend's brother might be a brave, excellent officer, an honest man, a good son, and a true Christian; but that he thought him the most disagreeable companion he had ever fallen in with. And Margaret sighed: not for Godfrey's sake, but for a passing remembrance of poor David Stuart's declaration in days of old, that he was puzzled how one so worthy could be so intolerable. Intolerable, thought Margaret, only because so utterly intolerant!

CHAPTER XXVI.

Godfrey was not intolerable to Sir Stephen. It was a strange link to knit brothers-in-law together; but it is certain Sir Stephen liked, in Godfrey, the sort of determined attempt to "keep Eleanor under," which the stern lieutenant still evinced, in spite of her marriage and altered position. They recurred to past times too; as they did at Penrhyn Castle, as they did whenever they met. They abused David Stuart to their hearts' content; they poured out alternate vials of wrath and scorn upon his memory. By one of the strange twists of human feeling, Godfrey was glad to be in Eleanor's house, and yet independent of her, to be there as her husband's friend, more than as her brother. Nor was he without thankfulness that his mother had in this man's house a luxurious, unmolested home; though he loathed the memory of the man whose treachery made such dependence a matter of necessity. As to Lady Raymond, her dependence sat very lightly upon her; it seemed to her to be on her own child. She saw little of Sir Stephen; she once saw him in a passion, and his violence frightened her so, that she became hysterical, and continued ill for many days; but Eleanor never spoke to her mother of her husband, so that beyond whispering to Godfrey that "Sir Stephen seemed a terrible man when provoked," she had nothing to communicate respecting him; and to that, Godfrey only responded sternly, "that he presumed Eleanor knew the duty of obedience to her husband, however willful her girlhood might have been;" and common-place Emma ventured on a little spontaneous observation (which she made, poor soul, in the innocent sincerity of her heart), that "it was so noble and generous of Sir Stephen marrying Eleanor when she had nothing, that Eleanor could not fail to love him, and look up to him."

As to the world of fashion, it was an embodiment of all that Godfrey most contemned; and hot were the discussions sometimes, when Lady Margaret was of the party, and defended what Godfrey called the "corrupt set" she belonged to. Her opposition, however, was not near so provoking to Godfrey as Eleanor's neutrality, who, after arguing a little, had a habit of withdrawing into the refuge of silence; or going, as Sir Stephen impolitely expressed it, "into one of her d—d sullen fits."

For Sir Stephen was no longer "in love" with Eleanor. Perhaps even if he had been, he might have been impolite: there are a particular class of men who seem to imagine they have paid their wives so extraordinary a compliment in marrying them, that they are released from the tax of all future civilities. They have given a premium, and are to live rent-free.

A conversation, which Godfrey partly overheard between the duchess, Lady Margaret, and his sister—as he stood, talking to nobody, knowing nobody, swinging his hat in the middle of the room—gave him an excellent text for his criticisms.

A lady, elegant, though not pretty, came up to the party. She shook hands with the Duchess of Lanark with a little eager squeeze, then with Margaret; and, after passing Mrs. Godfrey, who intervened, as if she had been merely a part of the ottoman, she extended one finger and half a smile to Eleanor, and glided on toward the duke, with whom she was soon engaged in what seemed a playful, animated conversation.

"Aha!" said the Duchess of Lanark, "Lady Eliza has found out that you will never be of any use, Eleanor. Don't you remember what a friend she made of you the first two seasons you came to London?"

"But how do you mean that I can be of no use? What did she expect of me?"

"Oh," said Margaret, laughing, "the duchess means, that, with all your undeniable beauty and your foolish cleverness that you keep for home friends, instead of turning it to account you have no *savoir faire*."

"But what does she want of me?"

"She wants of you, what she wants of us all She has always some little intrigue on foot some influence to exert; some one to protect or some one to frustrate, in the political world and you are precisely the person, on a casual inspection, to further her views."

"With political people? with ministers? Oh, Margaret!"

"Why not? ministers are but men; and men, from their hard occupied, intellectual lives, very glad to unbend. They are as merry as schoolboys at a fish dinner at Greenwich. Besides, you are quite capable of conversing with most men, Eleanor; you must be conscious of that. Now, Lady Eliza has gone on, all her life, carefully selecting, and carefully dropping her acquaintance. She has no friends, in *your* innocent translation of the word; but she has a circle; and there is not one of that circle that she does not turn to account. If any of the set prove useless, or drop in the estimation of the world, down they go in Lady Eliza's. That winning smile, and *accueil gracieux*, alter and fade into the genteelest little stare of alienation possible."

"There, and that is your world!" said Godfrey, scornfully, as he listened to the close of the last sentence.

"I did not make the world, Mr. Marsden," said Margaret, laughing; "I found it so when I came into it, and I am afraid I shall leave it so when I go out of it."

"It should teach you to despise and scorn those you live among."

"No, it should teach me only not to pin my faith on chance acquaintances, instead of home friends. Half the discontents of life might be

avoided, if we were content within our natural boundaries. Units as we are, ought not the inclining of the hearts of some eight or ten familiar persons toward us to satisfy our need?—but no; we insist on strangers valuing, and liking, and esteeming, and standing firmly by us; as if they could, as if they would, as if it were possible."

"They need not, at all events, forsake you, as you have just described. If they find fault, let them also hear justification."

"Justification! My dear Mr. Marsden, you may not be able to give it; you can not walk up to strangers, and say, 'I fear you have heard that I am stingy, stupid, immoral, violent; I beg to assure you, on the contrary, that I am the most generous, sprightly, well-conducted person alive.' Even if you could, you have yet to learn how the world will be bored by your wrongs, and yawn over your arguments. The world don't care a brass farthing whether you are falsely accused or no; why should it? Your friends care; justify yourself to them. Surely the little circle who willingly draw round us is better than the ranks of foes and neutrals we are forever seeking to penetrate. What can it signify what is said by a heap and herd of people who don't know you? And yet I have sometimes seen people more angry at the dislike of strangers, than at the defection of friends."

"Why, no man likes to be dropped and shunned; nor any woman either, I should suppose, as your Lady Elizas seem to be in the habit of doing."

"It ought to be indifferent to us, as no social flattery can make a bad man esteem himself, or feel other than what he is—a successful knave; so no social neglect can deprive man or woman of their real consciousness of desert. Besides, what, after all, is the dropping and shunning of the world?—they don't think it worth while to invite you, or they won't invite you, to mortify you. Is it such a loss? Do those who are invited say, 'I'm so sorry for you!—I am going to this or that delightful party!' Do they not, on the contrary, very often lament the hard fate that compels their attendance as a matter of form? Do they not say, 'I must go, just for once, for half an hour, to show myself, and this is the third Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. I have failed?' Once in a dozen times you may regret not having been asked: you may wish to see some body, or something; or you may feel hurt, because the slight is from some unexpected quarter, or from some one to whom you yourself have formerly shown cordial hospitality; but the other eleven times it would be a bore. Are you less cheerful or well entertained in your own house, reading a pleasant book, or chatting with one or two friends who have, at least, the merit of voluntarily seeking your society, than in a crowded room, saying the same thing over and over again to a number of hot, inattentive people, and getting a half-welcome from great lords, or what the Vicar of Wakefield wittily calls, a 'mutilated courtesy' from fine ladies?"

"You are a fine lady yourself, Lady Margaret, and you defend all that is done in that preposterous set; moreover, you can not possibly tell, by your own experience, what it is to be snubbed, or looked down upon."

"*All sets are* alike," said Margaret, laughing. "When I was very young, I had an excellent lesson against being 'fine,' as you call it. Mr. Fordyce wished me to go to a ball at the house of a Scotch physician; I demurred, because it was not my 'set,' but he wished it, and I went. Of course I knew no one. As I sat alone (musing rather saucily, I must own, on the inferior company I had honored with my presence), two young men sauntered through the room.

"'Oh!' said one, 'what a beautiful face!—who is she? I'll get introduced, and ask her to dance.'

"'No, no, Brooks, don't!' said his companion, eagerly; 'she's been sitting there alone all night: *it's somebody that nobody knows!*'

"I could not help laughing; and then I did what was wiser than laughing, I reflected that these people were not a bit more ridiculous, in fact, than I had been in my secret heart; and whenever in after years I felt a little inclined to play the fine lady, I remembered Mr. Brooks and his friend, and my own temporary obscurity."

"Ah! but you would have been indulgent and cordial without any such lesson, Margaret," interposed Eleanor. "It is in you—it is in your nature—to be indulgent, to be generous."

"Indulgent to whom?" said the duke, who had left Lady Eliza, and now joined the group before Godfrey. "Are ladies ever indulgent to each other?"

"We are, you see," said Margaret, smiling.

"You are an exception to the general rule," sneered Godfrey; "for the inhumanity of women to each other is notorious."

"Ah! what is called inhumanity; the not giving each other support under untoward circumstances. That is very often more from cowardice than cruelty."

"Oh, Margaret, this time Godfrey is right; nothing amazes me like the unkindness of women to each other. I assure you I have felt quite startled at hearing them; I have wondered how happy creatures, laying their protected heads on safe home-pillows, could judge so hardly as they do others who, perhaps, have led a life of tears; some one, perhaps, who has neither home, mother, or child, to keep her from drifting with the tide."

"Yes, and their indulgence, when they do give it," said Godfrey, eagerly, "is given so idiotically. You see them all petting and making much of some foolish wanton, with a high-spirited kindly husband, vainly trying to reclaim her, and all set against some woman twice as noble-hearted as her would-be judges. They always combine against the wrong person."

"They don't combine at all," said Lady Margaret. "They are the only visible realization of that political Irishism, an 'armed neutrality.' With respect to any woman in an awkward position, they are all ready to fall upon her as a victim, or to uphold, or to let her alone; but chance must decide which it shall be."

"Chance and self-interest," said Godfrey. "There is a great talk of English morality, but you may ride roughshod over the morality of the whole country, if you can but put a pair of gold spurs to your heels."

"A little of that, perhaps," said the duke; "but the main reason (if Margaret will forgive my saying so), is the want of justice which is apparent in every woman; and which is, in fact,

a want of understanding. If any proof were needed of the inferiority of intellect in women, it would be found in their treatment of each other. They are all, and always, unjust;—they are often kind. You can have tenderness, pity, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, any thing from them, except justice. That is a male virtue. For that they have neither courage nor comprehension. If they uphold a cause, it is because they are 'so sorry' for some one. Often they are 'sorry,' and yet dare not, for their lives, uphold. Often, as Mr. Marsden has said, they uphold, with a perversion of the real merits of different cases, that would make one smile, if it did not make one sigh. Those from whom better things might be expected, are not exempt. One of the rudest acts I ever saw done by one woman to another, was by a lady then occupied in compiling a history. Fit you are, I thought, to sift the facts of history, who can not even judge those of your own time. And the event proved I was right. When the book came out, it was most womanly. Graphic and interesting as a narrative; admirable as a moral work; but of no more value as an historical record (from that very defect, an utter want of justice, an absence of the power of conviction, a leaning and swaying first to one feminine prejudice, and then to another), than a book of fables. A man would have produced a history; the woman produced a very excellent story-book for the schoolroom!"

"Well, Lanark," said the duchess, rather pettishly, "you are the last person I should have expected to run down our sex; you, who are always paying us compliments. I am sure Margaret and I have good reason to be surprised at your opinions to-night."

"My opinion to-night, has been my opinion always," said the duke, gently; "but, perhaps, if I had not the happy consciousness that neither of those dearest to me—neither my wife, nor my sister, ever indulge in that bitterness which all men hate to hear, I should not express it. There are three sorts of tolerance: the tolerance of tenderness, and that," said he, with a smile, "you certainly have—the tolerance of carelessness, which I should be sorry to see in any one I loved; and the tolerance of justice, which I agree with Margaret in thinking the nearest approach we can make to the angelic nature. And now let us all go to bed."

Which accordingly they did; rather to Godfrey's discomfiture, who had intended, in spite of the lateness of the hour, to argue that pure, true justice was totally inconsistent with tolerance. He was so full of this, that he even talked of it to Emma on their way home; but desisted on her simply confessing that she had been too drowsy to hear the latter part of the evening's conversation: in fact, she feared she had been asleep; but hoped no one had observed it, as it would have seemed so rude, when they were talking about what interested them all so much. She thought people ought to be kind to each other, and merciful; but certainly, as Godfrey said, one ought not to be indulgent to those who were doing what they knew was wrong.

So Godfrey left off talking to his wife; and, opening his dressing-room door impatiently, entered and shut it again with a hard, determined clap, as though it had been a trap in which he had just caught a sinner; and while he undressed, he wondered how long it would be before he could obtain a ship, and get afloat.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EVENTS.

At length the frigate was obtained: Godfrey was exceedingly glad, and no one was the least sorry, except Emma. The amount of love in her simple heart for that square, stern man, none knew but heaven. She did not talk of it; for Emma was not eloquent, and she was extremely shy: only once, when confidentially questioned by the Duchess of Lanark (who was very curious about other women's homes, and the degrees of affection and comfort enjoyed therein), she owned hesitatingly that she thought Godfrey "very grand—the grandest creature that ever was." And though the duchess might puzzle a little over the exact meaning of the phrase, it obviously implied an intense conviction of his superiority, which, being precisely the feeling Godfrey most wished to inspire, it is to be presumed he was contented with his wife.

It would have been hard, indeed, upon her had he not been contented! Faithfully she did her duty "in that state of life into which it had pleased God to call her;" and it may be, that her soul walked the path to heaven with more certainty than many a brighter intelligence. Her children were as carefully trained as Eleanor's; and though none were as lovely as Frederick, or as clever as Clephane, they were good and governable. Even the last new baby (*vice* a first, second, and third baby, superseded) had its own green bud of a notion of right and wrong; and put down its little willful, quivering lip, and shook the tears from its glittering eyes, at the uplifted finger, warning it not to let

"Its angry passions rise,"

long before it was old enough to comprehend the sweet lines in the volume of hymns by Dr. Watts, which Emma kept in her pocket, and which she continually referred to; saying that it put all she wanted to say to the children "into such nice words!"

Oh, Watts! gentle-hearted old man! did you ever foresee the universal interest which would link itself to your name, among the innocent hearts of earth? Did angels reveal to you in your own death-hour, how many a dying child would murmur your pleasant hymns as its farewell to earth?—how many living children repeat them as their most familiar notions of prayer? Did you foretell, that in your native land, and wherever its language is spoken, the purer and least sinful portion of the ever-shifting generations, would be trained with your words? And now, in that better world of glory, whose mysteries of companionship we are not allowed to penetrate, do the souls of young children crowd round you?—do you hold sweet converse with those, who, perhaps, were first led into the track of glory by the faint light which those sparks of your soul left on earth? Do they recognize you, the souls of our departed little ones—souls of the children of the long ago dead—souls of the children of the living—lost and

lamented, and then fading from memory like sweet dreams?

It may be so; and that when the great responsible gift of authorship is accounted for, your crown will be brighter than that bestowed on philosophers and sages!

As the departure of Godfrey drew near, Emma had a hard struggle to keep back all evidence of her sorrow; for she knew it displeased her stern helpmate, and she knew that it was in the natural course of his profession that he should make these long absences. Still, such partings are hard; and it is lonesome and dispiriting, to live on a narrow income, with helpless children, the husband and father away in storms and danger! So may God bless all sailors' wives, say I; may those they wait for, come back in safety over the trackless ocean to their own sea-surrounded country; and may they always find a heart as innocently glad of their return, as poor Emma Marsden's!

Eleanor would fain have lessened the loneliness of her sister-in law, by making her reside under her own roof during Godfrey's absence; but this he did not like; it did not accord with his notions of independence; and he preferred that his wife should remain in her own little cottage, and superintend her humble establishment.

Before the ship sailed, two events took place, which in different degrees, saddened them all. Lady Raymond died; and Lady Margaret Fordyce was summoned to Italy by the old Duchess of Lanark. Lady Raymond died very happily, seeing in Eleanor's destiny only a very comfortable position in life, and in her sweet children happiness for years to come.

Old Mrs. Christison sent her careful prescriptions for preparing Iceland moss jelly (which, it is fair to the kind old lady to state, were copied out with tears of anxiety); and Lady Raymond had so great a faith in the little gossiping tender Scotchwoman, that for many days previous to her decease she would take nothing but "a little of Mrs. Christison's moss," and begged Eleanor would tell her so.

It was a bond between Eleanor and that simple heart afterward, that in her limited and narrow way she had done her best always to serve and soothe the gentle creature, who had at least departed this life without ever knowing what it was *not* to be served and soothed, in times of trial, sickness, or grief.

Godfrey's regret for his mother, was strong and vehement. As the boat rowed off that took him on board his new ship, and he looked back and reflected that when next he touched old England's shores, she would not be there to welcome him; he folded his arms hard across his breast, and the sailors thought they had never seen so stern-faced a commander; yet Godfrey was nearer a burst of weeping at that moment than ever he had been in his life. He loved his mother dearly and well. He lamented her sorely and long.

Eleanor thought, as a matter of course, the money which Godfrey had restored to Lady Raymond, might now return to his wife; and she was somewhat surprised at the angry refusal of Sir Stephen to perform what she thought a moderate piece of generosity. Sir Stephen judged *differently. He said there could be no doubt Godfrey's view was a just one*: that Sir John Raymond would have left him no legacy at all, if he had imagined it possible his own daughter would be penniless; and, therefore, the retaining it as her portion was a matter of course.

Eleanor sighed. They were so rich, it made little difference to them; it would make a great difference to Emma and her children. But she had not power to decide it otherwise.

The year of Lady Raymond's death, Eleanor passed entirely at Castle Penrhyn and Glencarrick. Her children were at once her solace and her joy; and little Clephane's health seemed to have made a wonderful rally. His spirits were gayer, his step more elastic; and the blooming Frederick was not always Sir Stephen's sole companion.

In her Highland retirement young Lady Penrhyn was idolized and blessed. Many a scheme for the poor, many a good work, that had been set on foot at Aspendale, was now repeated in the sunny obscurity of these northern hills. Her plans and her schools, which had endured for years before it was the fashion to be interested in these things, were copied, as unacknowledged hints, in later days. Individual examples are the hinges on which the great doors of reform and progress turn. Many an experimental struggle of this kind is made, before some great good name forms a rallying point, hangs a sort of banner over good deeds—before the philanthropy of vanity makes that glorious, which was before merely useful. Eleanor had her clubs, her schools, her aids to emigration, her little land allotments, her prizes for spinning and weaving, her adult female society for teaching home usefulness to those who were to be thrifty poor men's wives, without either the encouragement of praise, or the assistance of subscriptions. Silently, obscurely, she worked; and long afterward, when others were doing the same sort of thing on a more dazzling scale, they said they thought they recollected seeing an attempt of that kind in Scotland, on Sir Stephen Penrhyn's property; but a mere attempt; nothing like what they were doing themselves, and what the whole world were called on to look at.

Among the objects of interest at the Castle, she had at first greatly exerted herself in favor of the handsome young Welshwoman at the Lodge; but life and life's experience wrought a great change in Eleanor's feelings in this particular case. On their arrival, her frequent patient attempts to lead Bridget Owen to talk of her position and her misfortunes, were frustrated by sullen silence. She would see Eleanor, approach from the casement; and turning away her fierce, dejected, and most beautiful eyes, would affect to be busy within, and send the child to stand ready with the key of the gate; leaving, as it were, no excuse for intrusion. Then, a change took place; something insolent and cheerful dawned in Bridget Owen's manner; she stood idle in the sun, her glossy black hair tied with a red handkerchief, watching the gardener as he planned a garden by the Lodge, and trained creepers and roses round the windows. She sate idle in the porch, while an old woman busied herself within and without in the household tasks necessary to be done. The little boy no longer brought the key to Eleanor; the old woman carried it down; or the gardener, if he was working there, opened the gate.

As she was walking, on her return after the second season she passed in London, Eleanor saw Bridget Owen with a baby in her arms. She stopped and spoke to Sandy, who was busy on a palisade of rustic work, under the gardener's orders.

"Sandy," said she, "whose child is it that Bridget is taking charge of? Is any one ill in the village?"

Sandy paused before he answered, and was long finishing a twist in the interlaced wood.

"Troth, mileddy, I dinna ken," said he at last without looking up, "I'm thinking it's just her ain, or the deevil's!"

Her own! hers; the wife of a felon exiled beyond seas? Eleanor colored, hesitated, went on a few steps, and then turned back.

She went up the little path to the Lodge, apparently unexpected, for Bridget Owen who had been sitting in the porch, rose hastily with the infant in her arms and continued standing. She had long ceased to offer the respect of a courtesy when Eleanor appeared. The heart of that pure young wife and mother beat fast and faint.

"Whose child are you taking care of Bridget?" said she.

Here was a moment's silence; and Eleanor's eyes, which had rested on the infant, were lifted to Bridget's face. She received the answer, and the look with which it was accompanied she never forgot.

"Mine!" said the voice: and the look said, "question me further if you dare!"

Mine. She admitted it. She gave the child a passionate kiss; she looked again at Eleanor; and then she stepped within the threshold of her decorated cottage, with the pride of a gipsy queen. She did not close the door. She knew she had dropped a bar between her and that pale astonished lady, stronger than iron. She had no fear of being followed.

For a minute, Eleanor remained speechless; rooted to the spot; gazing forward, but seeing nothing; then she knew that Bridget's eldest child, the pretty gipsy-looking boy, had stolen to the door, and was watching her; something roguish in his smile, perhaps, made her think, for a moment, that he resembled her little Frederick.

She turned, and rapidly redescended the path. As she did so, her light dress, fluttering, caught on the half-finished fence at which Sandy and the gardener were working. Her back had been toward these men; but, in turning to disengage her dress, she suddenly faced them. They were not working at the fence; they were watching her. Keenly, narrowly, with the acute watch of those who never read any books but the looks of their superiors, and read those all day long and draw their own conclusions. In the gardener's countenance there was only a shrewd cunning, but in poor old Sandy's there was something more. As he came forward to help to disengage her muslin gown, his respect struggled in vain with his sympathy. He had been her father's servant; David Stuart's servant; he remembered her as a child; and the conscious words broke piteously from his lips, "Oh, mileddy, we've a' our trials."

The lady of the Castle shunned her servant's gaze. Her own averted eyes wandered past the garden of the lodge—that little paradise in the rough group of firs—that star of flowers and ornament, by the grim old gateway of her domain—to the open casement where Bridget stood, rocking her infant on her breast. Outside the same window, leaning against it, stood the elder child. The golden sunset fell softly on the group; and Eleanor remembered how she had seen the pretty boy in the same sort of light, the first evening she arrived at the gate of her new home; when Bridget Owen wept—and Eleanor pitied her!

Among the miracles of the working of memory, none perhaps is greater than that power of remaining dormant, which recollections the most vivid and the most important seem to possess. How they entered our minds; where they have been garnered up; why we garnered them at all, not then knowing the weight we should afterward attach to them; are secrets known only to Him who framed our complex nature.

As Eleanor turned from the lodge that day, a thousand looks, words, and scenes, crowded on her brain, which she was wholly unconscious of having ever noted while they passed, but which weaved themselves into strange connection with her present impressions. "Remember us," they seemed to say; "we are *the proofs*."

A dark thought haunted Eleanor; a dark thought, which strangely included that bright spot, crowded with flowers; that pretty child; the lodge, and the woman who lived there. And when Sir Stephen came in from shooting on that particular day, he told Eleanor that she looked so pale he thought she must have taken a chill. It was a chill that never left Eleanor's heart—that seemed to freeze her most when her heart was warmest—when she sat by her children's cradles.

Her children! Oh, how she loved them, as they lay there in all the beauty of purity; substitutes for the hope of any other love, or any other trust upon earth, within the circle of home—of that home at once the refuge and the prison of her youth!

And from the day when Eleanor had seen Bridget Owen with the infant in her arms, she never made any further attempt to soothe or reason with her. She never stopped to gather flowers from the wild profusion growing there. She never lingered to caress the little boy. She came seldom that way out of the park; and when she did, it was with a rapid step and downcast eye, as though something evil dwelt there. And of late, Bridget Owen might be seen working on the rustic bench in the garden; and perhaps singing at her work; never heeding or stopping in her song because Eleanor went by, but ordering the old woman down to the gate with the key, and taking it back carelessly, singing as before; and the old woman seemed to be Bridget's servant, and servant to Bridget's children.

So time sped on, till Eleanor had been married between seven and eight years.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOLICITUDE.

THEY were at Glencarrick. The sun shone bright on the lake; and the heather lay purple

on the hill. The children were at their morning tasks by Eleanor's side, and she had just succeeded in engaging Frederick's attention to his book, after repeated assurances that he could not learn—"because the voices of the flies disturbs me so, buzzin' about, and it 'minds me of flowers"—when Sir Stephen came in.

"Eleanor," said he, "I want the boys; I want to take them over the hill, to Donald Macpherson's farm."

"Oh, yes! with papa—with papa!" joyously exclaimed the little truant, as he jumped down from his chair, and caught his father's hand.

"Is it not very far for the boys? Do you want them both?" And Eleanor looked anxiously out at the distant spot to which their morning pilgrimage tended.

"Yes, I want them both. I'm sure Clephane is strong enough now; you make a girl and a bookworm of that boy. Janet was saying this morning, that it was quite absurd that he couldn't do what other children of his age are allowed to do with the most perfect impunity."

"I assure you I do not think Clephane is strong enough to walk to Macpherson's and back."

"Well, he can have the pony, and ride and tie with Frederick. There are three or four of my tenants coming over there—there's Pearson from Perth; he's never seen the boys; I want him to see them. We shall be back before sunset. Come along, boys."

Clephane looked wistfully at his mother. She kissed both the children, and said:

"I hope you will not be late; there is a heavy night-dew at this time of year, and it turns so chill in the evening."

"Oh! d—n it," said Sir Stephen, impatiently, "the boy must begin some time or other to do like other boys, and I'll look after him. Janet's going with us, and we shall be back to dinner."

"Now then," called Lady Macfarren's loud voice from the lawn, "are you ready, Stephen? come away! come away, my man, Fred; come away, young lady (for you're only half a boy, Clephane); come away, dogs, and let's be off for the hill."

They were off; and Eleanor stood and watched them for a while. Little Frederick skipping by his father's side, and Clephane on his pony, and the tall figures of Sir Stephen and his sister, making, as it seemed to Eleanor, strides of equal strength through the long heather which fringed the track. She watched them out of sight, and then she closed the little lesson books, and wandered out to sketch; for at Glencarrick she had none of the occupations of Castle Penrhyn; her schools, her poor, and her sick, and the numerous small matters which engage the attention of those who deem that "property has its duties as well as its rights." As she returned, she met Lady Macfarren coming toward the house.

"Are the boys in?" said Eleanor; "I am glad you are back so early in the day."

"There's no one home but myself," said her sister-in-law. They went a little beyond the farm to look at some cattle that were for sale, and that Mr. Pearson was just mad about; I'd *seen all I wanted* to see, and so I came *away.*"

"It is a pity they went further, because of Clephane: was he very tired?"

"Oh, he's just spoilt, that's what he is! and I should think Stephen had had enough of him by this time. He's afraid to ride his pony, and he's not able for the walk; and he won't speak out, and have done with it, and be left behind; but keeps looking at his father and me while we're speaking, to see which we want him to do; I never saw such a milksop as that boy in all my life—I never saw such a poor, creeping creature; heaven knows whose blood he's got in his veins! There's not a drop of mine or Stephen's, I'm sure."

"No, he is not at all strong," said Eleanor, with a sigh; and a certain thrill of bitterness passed through her heart at the image of her weary little boy, watching the countenances of his robust, unloving relatives, to see how he could be least a burden, after having once set out. A burden! her treasure, and her love!

"I wish he had returned with you," she said.

Lady Macfarren gave a short, scornful laugh.

"I'm not very fond of brats, as you know—not even of Stephen's—though Frederick's a nice child enough: and I had no wish to be three hours instead of one, coming over the hill this hot day, I assure you. No such dawdling work for me. I'd send the boy out with a nurse, next time. Indeed I advised Stephen to threaten him!"

"To threaten him!—threaten Clephane!" said Eleanor, the blood rushing to her cheek; "for what reason?"

"Ah! there's a good deal of hypocrisy and slyness in these sort of children sometimes Making themselves of consequence, and pretending they can't do what they can do well enough, and only want to be made to do. If he was mine, I'd flog it out of him in a week."

"Your system did not answer very well with your own!"

It was the first exasperated sentence Eleanor had ever flung at her sister-in-law. Lady Macfarren's son had run away from home, and entered the merchant service, writing word (not to his mother, but to Sir Stephen) that he knew he'd entered a hard life, but if he was to be ill-used, he'd rather it should be by strangers. Her color rose at the taunt, and her eyes flashed fire.

"There's nothing I did to my own," she said, "that I wouldn't do again ten times over, if I had the guiding of him; and I just pray that the pride may be ground out of him; for not a penny will I ever pay to help him—not if he stood there a shivering beggar, and wanted but a crust of bread!" and she swung her fierce arm round, and pointed to the portico of the house.

Eleanor looked at her with a shudder of repugnance.

"Oh! no one would believe that you had ever been a mother!" said she, as she turned away. "No one would think it possible!"

But she-wolves have cubs; and motherhood had not been denied to Lady Macfarren.

"I'll tell you what it is, Lady Penrhyn," said the gaunt woman, coming a step or two nearer her shrinking sister-in-law, "the sooner Clephane, and Frederick, too, are taken out of your hands, and put to some good hard school, the better. Who ever heard of a couple of lads of

their age sitting perched up, learning reading and writing from a woman? It's time they were weaned of such mother's milk, and so I've told Stephen; and I think you'll find you'll have little more of this coddling home-work. We're going to pack them off to school in Edinburgh."

To school! Frederick—Clephane—her pale, gentle Clephane! Eleanor was startled. She wondered how she could prevent this—this, which she knew to be unnecessary; for David Stuart had given her an education, which made her more than usually able to conduct that of her little sons. She planned all she would say to Sir Stephen to convince him—to persuade him that it would be best for the children to be at home, at least for a year or two longer. She conned over all the arguments she could think of, as likely to weigh with him; and then she sighed; for she knew that it would depend less on conviction, than on the disposition to thwart and govern her. That strange, instinctive desire to tyrannize in outward circumstances, which comes like a disease to those who feel they have no sway over the mind; that determination to annoy, since they can not influence; that fierce hope to prove doubtful power, by forbidding, exacting, and compelling; that angry impulse of a narrow soul, which answers to the exertion of brute strength in a school-boy, had too often been evident to Eleanor in her husband, not to teach her that all she could really rely upon was, that he would not care to oppose her in this matter; that he would not think it "worth while."

The silent day wore on, while she thought of these things. The sun glowed over the fair blue hills, glistened among the trembling birch-trees by the lake, and slowly withdrew his farewell smile to dawn upon other lands. The chill mist rose above the water. Eleanor thought of Clephane, and grew restless.

At length it was all but dark. Lady Macfarren was seated at a table at some distance from her sister-in-law, involved in calculations about the farm, and the cattle they had been viewing.

"I declare it's getting that dark, I can hardly see the lines!" said she.

Then, as if Eleanor's heart had hitherto resisted the obvious fact that the day was going down, she started, and, covering her face with her hands, she murmured:

"Oh, God! something *must* have happened, or they would have been home long ago."

"Happened?—what should happen, and Sir Stephen and the keeper out with the boys? Really, Lady Penrhyn, you're a silly creature! They'll have waited to dine, and then they'll get Macpherson's dog-cart, and come home that way, and Clephane 'ill be spared any more of his walking and riding."

So saying, Lady Macfarren rang for lights; and for a while Eleanor curbed her fears to this rational view of the delay. But as time wore on, again the wild alarm woke in her heart—irrepressible—unrepressed. She rose and walked to and fro by the windows of the large, handsome room. She thought of the evening she first arrived; of the no-welcome of her hard, fierce sister-in-law on that occasion. She could not tell why that evening returned to memory at that particular moment, unless it were that the absence of all sympathy oppressed her. Perhaps it was that which made her also think of Margaret: oh, for Margaret's sweet voice and clasping hand! But Margaret was at Naples.

Eleanor stopped in her restless pacing up and down, and looked out into the night; she thought of that Italy she had never seen, and of what Margaret might be doing at that hour; she looked at the clear evening-star, and wondered if such stars looked down into the blue Bay of Naples, when Margaret and David Stuart used to sing there together. Oh, Margaret! good, pious, cheerful, beautiful Margaret! what would Eleanor have given for one tender sentence from your lips! The star that she gazed on, grew large, and trembled through her tears. She resumed her walk to and fro; she felt like a creature in a cage. Lady Macfarren looked up:

"Will you not be better sitting down, Lady Penrhyn? It's impossible to count, or do any thing, while you're flitting to and fro in that way."

"I beg your pardon: I feel uneasy; but, indeed, as you say, they will all have dined, and the children will only need putting to bed when they come, so I'll go to my own room, and wait there."

As Eleanor passed through the hall to the staircase, she saw a group of servants at the open door—poor old Sandy was among them! He turned, and saw her; she paused wistfully.

"We thoct, mileddy, may be a' wasna richt; and there's a wee laddie gone up Donald Macpherson's way to know, 'gin Sir Stephen left the farm, when he left it."

It was meant to soothe Eleanor, but it deepened her terror; even the servants evidently thought "something must have happened." The little lad returned; he said the message from the farm was, that Sir Stephen, and the boys hadn't left till very late, Master Clephane having lain down to rest; that they were to go home a different way, for Mr. Macpherson's car was lent to a neighboring farmer; and that he thought they'd be very little after the messenger.

Eleanor was again relieved. She went to her dressing-room, and sate there with renewed patience. Two little silver mugs, the gift of Lord Peebles; some oat-cake and new milk, were set on a table, to await the absentees. Their names were engraved on the cups, with many a careful flourish; and Eleanor half smiled at the recollection of all the Airle's chuckling witticisms, about her hurry to discourage him from any wandering thoughts of matrimony, by bringing two male heirs at once into the family, and the expensive household his cousin Stephen would have to keep up, if that was the way Eleanor intended always to manage matters; and the good example she set the young matrons of the village; with sundry other kindly little fooleries; which wound up with presenting two cups, two corals, two curious old massive spoons, a "double set for the double quantity of company that had unexpectedly arrived at the Castle;" a joke which the Airle repeated to every one for at least two months after the advent of the twins, and always with the same happy little laugh at his own sprightliness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

They would soon be home! Eleanor's courage rose; and with her courage, a wish to remonstrate with Sir Stephen, on his keeping two such young children out, till such a late, undue hour. It was perverse, after all the warnings Eleanor had given; and when he knew Clephane was so delicate. She felt a wish to give a bolder and more reproachful greeting than she had yet ventured upon with her husband. He ought to be more considerate. Then she fell into a train of reflection on the uselessness of reproaches; on the habit so common in the world, of making that a subject of battle and protest with a familiar connection, which would pass off with a polite apology in a stranger. How often the mere foolish fact of being kept waiting, or some equally trivial offense, leads on from one word to another, till a bitter and angry dispute is the result; when the two sentences, "I fear I am late," and "Do not think of it, I beg," would be probably all that would have passed, if the parties had not been *familiar* enough to quarrel. Why should we be ruder to our friends and relations, than to persons indifferent to us?

Eleanor resolved, wisely enough, to avoid such altercation. Reproaching Sir Stephen would not bring back the sunshine of a lost day, lift the dew off the hill, and the darkness off the lake, or undo the mischief of fatigue and cold, if mischief were already done. They would probably come in chilled and tired; and she would see them put to bed, and delay, till the next expedition, any observation on this past imprudence. She would not be peevish or irritable, because she had been anxious. If there could be no love between her and her husband, let there at least be peace.

It was well that she thought so. It was well that she schooled her heart to be at peace with her husband, for this was no time for bitterness. With a solemn stroke the knell of that anxiety had been tolled, for whose sake she would have been at strife with him! Already, with a hurried trembling tread, the feet of the messenger of evil tidings passed swiftly over the dark heather that lay beyond the house.

Sit yet a little longer, poor mother, and wait in meek expectation to lift the hats from those shining curly heads, and see those rosy lips quaff from the little silver cups; yet a little longer wait—and hope!

The message sent to allay Eleanor's anxiety by Donald Macpherson, was a compound of fact and fiction. The farmer heard with dismay of the non-appearance of Sir Stephen and his sons; and no sooner had he dispatched the messenger, than he hastily mounted his horse and rode to the next farm, where he had lent the car that was to take them home.

"Archie," said the old man as he dismounted, "whar's Sir Stephen?"

"Is he no at the hoose? He suld ha been hame lang syne."

"By the Lord, Archie, something 'ill hae gane wrong! Gude save us, and thae twa bonny lads—what 'ill be come to them."

"Hoot, mon, there'll be no harm come to them. *The cairt was no in*, and they walkit doon, and just *tuk boat at the auld boat-house*, to cross the loch. The keeper's here with Master Clephane's pony, for Sir Stephen sent him back to abide here, for maybe Mr. Pearson 'ud be glad o' him the morn."

"Mon, mon," said the old farmer, dolefully, "there's a lad just been o'er the hill frae Gleacarrick, that cam straight awa, and Sir Stephen was no at the hoose. It wadna tak four hour, nor the half o't, to take them hame by the loch. O, mon! Lord send they're a' safe!"

And the pious old Highlander lifted his bonnet from his gray hair, and looked tremblingly to heaven.

To saddle Clephane's pony, was the work of a few moments, and the two farmers rode together down to the lake side. There was no one in the boat-house: the old boatman had gone with Sir Stephen and the two boys; but as they stood irresolute, not knowing where to turn: no creature within sight: no human habitation within two miles: they spied on a rise of the hill a woman frantically gesticulating to them: they rode up to her; it was the boatman's wife. The poor old creature clung shivering and shrieking to the mane of Macpherson's rough Shetland.

"Oo! ride roun' the head o' the loch, for the boat's gaed doon!" said she.

It was with difficulty they could get any connected account from her, but it appeared that the boat had been long unused, lying in the sun; that the boatman wanted to fill it to try, before they set sail, but that Sir Stephen was impatient, and said the boat was well enough; that they all got in, and went across rather more than half way, very slowly, for there was scarce any wind, and that not fairly with them—and then—the boat disappeared!

Yes, all had happened as she said. Sir Stephen, already worried by the difficulty with Clephane and his pony, and angry with his sister for quitting the party, spoke with savage impatience to the old boatman, and assisted, himself, in shoving off the boat, and putting up the tiny sail. At first they did well enough; then the boat lagged, and went uneasily through the water: then it became evident that she leaked considerably; a plank must have started.

Sir Stephen put his hand under a rotten board in the flooring, and tore up the planks under his feet.

"Bail it out—bail out the water,!" shouted he.

Alas! the water was rushing in at more than one crevice. The light wind played mockingly round them; the sunset lay rosy and still on land and water; the long, sweet-wooded shore stretched far away, edged with a golden gleam and a fringe of shadows.

Oh! God were they to die so?

The old boatman's teeth chattered with fear. Sir Stephen hastily undressed; he measured the bright sheet of water with his eye. It was not impossible to swim to land; it could not be more than a mile and a half: he had swum more than that distance for a bet, and he was to swim now for his life. His life! ay, and his children's lives. No, not his children—a child: he felt it could be but one—it was a chance even with that one. The clinging weight of a child of six years old, to a man swimming, is heavy odds.

Oh! terrible moment—oh, hour of strange and

insupportable horror! And the water sucking the boat down, and no time to deliberate—no time for any thing but quick instinct. It all passed through his mind in less time than it takes to read; as he tore off his clothes, and the heavy boat, water-logged, rocked under him. His eyes looked wildly on Clephane, with pity, with horror; the pale little face was marble white; a soft, strange, appealing smile came over it.

"Never mind me, papa; save Freddy; the boatman will take me."

"Oh, Clephane!—oh, my boy!—oh, God! your mother!"

But a wild scream from Frederick, caused the father to turn. His lovely favorite had just comprehended, in the gush of water that filled the boat, the full extent of his danger. He sprang toward his father! There was no time to undo the fastenings of his dress: his head was bare. Sir Stephen pulled off his shoes, and swung him on his naked back.

"Put your arms round my neck, Fred; don't be frightened—don't let go."

They were in the water!

As the boat sank, Sir Stephen heard the voice of Clephane. He had even then a consciousness of dreading to hear another bitter scream, such as Frederick had given a minute before. He heard no scream, but he heard the voice of the child in a loud, plaintive tone: it said,

"Our Father which art in Heaven!"

He saw its face for a moment; not looking for help—looking upward; he saw its hand trying to grasp something, some rope or portion of the sail, something attached to the boat. He saw the old boatman, as in a dream, take the boy in his arms; he saw nothing more—he was striking out for his life, and Frederick's life.

Give him strength, oh, God! He so strong, so proud of his strength! Will it ever enable him to reach the shore?

Loosen your clutch, dear, frightened, childish arms, closed so tight round your father's throat, while he pants for breath! Do not be terrified; do not shriek in his ear, as he breasts the water with an effort; getting wearied; do not wail out the words "Clephane—my darlin' Clephane," like a sound of doom over the lake! Be quiet, dear boy; that's right; don't fear; hold firm—we shall do it yet.

The shore!—the dim shore—the dim, distant shore; it is nearer—he can distinguish cottages, though they gleam but white specks. Oh, help! oh, help! he faints! No—he rests on the water. Is he to live? is he to die? What a weight this child—this poor, bewildered child! Do not kiss your father's neck with chill, wet lips, poor little one! It torments, it unmans even him! Be quiet, do not fear: hold firm.

Swim on—strike out! He can see the windows of the cottages, sparkling like jewels in the sunset light. The shore is nearing fast. It is certainly nearing! But Sir Stephen is getting very faint. That magnificent, athletic form strains every muscle for life, for dear life! Will he or death win the race?

Swim on—strike out—rest a little. His eyes are getting dim; the rolling as of distant thunders is in his ears; his head and shoulders sink too low, and his child is choking with the water; its wet dress flaps on its face; the father is getting feeble, very feeble. He does not see the shore; he sees nothing real; he sees his home, as in a vision, and Eleanor getting the news. Is he drowning?

What, what was that sound? that shout, that wild, dim echo from some living world of safety, that smites him in his death hour? Where does it come from? What has it to do with him? They see him—they see him from the cottages! Help him! save him! even if you can't swim, wade to him—fling ropes—get a boat—get him in—help! He is so near now you can surely reach him by the hair, by the child's dress; by the knotted handkerchief: seize and help!

It is done; he is on the land once more; among wet, struggling, dripping, breathless men. He does not see them; he does not hear them; he does not feel the shingled beach against his torn and bleeding skin—that stranded, majestic statue of a man. He lies motionless—senseless—exhausted: not dead—no, not dead! God is very merciful. Untie the little child; unclasp its arms. No, no, carry them both in together, to the warmth of the fire in one of the cottages; chafe him well, and lift the child away. He sees—he speaks! he knows one of the men. Stand away—let him speak to the man he knows.

"We've had a sad accident. Take care of the child! Ah! Frederick, we've had a tussle for it; we must put a little life into you now, my boy!" The father smiles a faint smile.

Put a little life into him! Put a little life into him! Why are they all so still and sad? Put the long wet hair off his lovely little face! His eyes are not quite closed, nor yet open He has fainted, with the chill washing over of the waters so often, in the long struggling way. Chafe him as he lies on the knees of the cottar's wife, his beautiful limbs freed now from the cold soaked dress; naked and free as the limbs of the strong man, who saved the child's life and his own by that feat of unrivaled swimming! Chafe him, and be careful of him, and wrap him up warm and softly, that he may be carried to his poor mother, and comfort her! Why are you all so slack? What ails you all? Stand by; let the father look at his child!

Well?

His child is dead. His child is a little lovely corpse!

Both his children are dead: the one he sought to save, and the one he left to die. Both! And they tell it to Eleanor; and she comprehends what has fallen upon her that fearful day!

In the morning she was the mother of living children, and in the evening of departed souls!

CHAPTER XXX.

SORROW.

If any one had told Eleanor that she would have survived her children's death, she would not have believed the prophecy. None of us know what we can live past, till we have proved it. God sends strange strength to carry

as on from one great trial to the next that is reserved for us. We live through them, and past them. So that to the world, they seem over; so that strangers cheerfully observe to each other, that we "seem quite ourselves again." The loud weeping, the starts of pain, the bitter yearnings for the past, the sick shrinkings from the future, are put by, like funeral garments: they no longer prove to the casual observer that we have sustained some dear loss. We bear unequally, it is true: body and mind have accidental differences. One person will die of a slight wound that scarcely leaves a visible scar; and another may be crushed on a railway, miraculously rescued, the broken limbs bandaged, the tortured frame restored to action and health, and life set going in the human machine as before. One person will sink under a sorrow, that at a different time, perhaps, or in different circumstances, would have seemed comparatively light; and another will survive what seems a very martyrdom of woe. The human heart is very strong: strong to love, strong to hope, but above all strong to endure.

So Eleanor lived past it all! Past the first dreadful hours, when the news seemed as if it could not be real; as if some dreadful nightmare held possession of her senses, from which, if she did but take patience, she must wake at last. Past that scraping and gnawing of the heart by little trivial things—the leaping of Frederick's squirrel in its cage, watching her with bright brown eyes, as it had watched the little child for food or play; the singing of Clephane's birds, with a loud thrilling song that seemed to cleave her very soul in two; the coming out of spring primroses in the woodlands where they had played; all the life that still went on in the world, strong and fragile, when death only was for them; death, and the still, silent, changeless grave!

Past the blank cheerless mornings, whose sunrise no longer brought their merry good-morrow into her room! Past the solemn, dreary nights, when she lay in her bed, moaning and sobbing for those who slept in the church-yard! Past the haunted fanciful period of grief, when standing in the dim evening light, it almost seemed as if two little white phantoms would flit across the lawn and along the gravel walk to meet her; as if some laughing voice would start up in the nursery, where she sat with her straining eyes resting on the accustomed furniture and moveless broken toys, and bid her know it was all a miserable dream.

Past the mystery of a tempted despair; when demons seemed to speak to her soul of the strange fate by which all those she loved were to die by this death of drowning. David Stuart—her boys—why not join them? Why not also die so? Under that cold sheet of water was rest. Under, was rest!

She lived past it all. The time came that Eleanor ceased from weeping. The crash and tumult of grief's storm was over; the wail of its winds was hushed; the sun rose again with the common light of day; and the tossed and beaten wreck of her most cherished hope, lay still and stranded on the shore of usual life.

The father also lamented; though for a briefer space. With savage grief; cursing his own folly about the boat that was not fit to use; cursing the hard fate of his merry, loving child. Flinging himself down on the heather over which those little light steps had followed him, and weeping there with loud convulsive sobs; lying for hours silent with folded arms and his face to the earth, so that when he rose and strode away over the hill, the weight of his form lay marked out like the lair of a couchant beast. Lamenting! lamenting after his own fashion. Wondering why his children were born, to be doomed to die so young and so suddenly; murmuring against heaven, and seeing no pleasure upon earth. And then it passed by—like the grief of a creature whose cubs had been destroyed.

Even Lady Maclarren grieved for the two children; hard as she was she was human; and when the great terrible news came; and she knew that her brother had been in peril of his life, and that his boys had perished, her soul was shaken even to tears. She had a feeling too, in her regret, which was independent of tenderness. She saw her brother once more without an heir to his name and estates. No other child had blest the marriage which she viewed with such displeasure, and though Clephane's life had always seemed a thing little to be counted upon, she had surely reckoned that Frederick would inherit, in the far future, the accumulated riches and consequence of the family. Now, as she looked at the sad, pale, delicate mother, her mind misgave her as to that future; gloom and dissatisfaction mingled with and overbore more feminine regret; nor was it without a certain superstitious sympathy, that she heard the villagers and simple Highland folk speak mysteriously again of the prophecy that there never should be an heir to Castle Penryhn in the direct line. There had not been for three generations. Her brother had inherited Castle Penryhn from one cousin, and he would inherit the earldom of Peebles from another.

They were at the Castle. A cold, damp autumn day had gradually thickened over to drizzling rain, and Eleanor who was beyond the park, hastily retraced her steps, to regain the shelter of the house. The shortest way to return, was by the lodge, and the side gate had been left open by her desire when she passed through. She felt weak and ill, and her feet lifted slowly over the drifted leaves which made a silent pathway through the wood. Her limbs ached, her head felt dizzy, she doubted whether she could go much further without fainting. She looked up at the lodge, bosomed in pleasant shrubs, and bright with dahlias and autumnal flowers; she felt that her choice lay between resting there or dropping in the park road. She turned and ascended the little pathway to the porch. There she sate down; overcome alike by the sick faintness of memory, which recalled the day she had questioned Bridget, and by physical indisposition. The door of the lodge stood open, but she did not venture in; she heard voices, Sir Stephen's voice and Bridget Owen's. Then she would have risen to depart, but could not. Slantways, she could see into the pretty parlor, with its deep carpeted bay window where Sir Stephen's dogs lay crouched, and where he and Bridget were seated. For she was sitting, that woman; sitting by Sir Stephen's side, her hand in his; Eleanor was spell-bound! She saw,

she could not choose but see; she heard, she could not choose but hear. Sir Stephen was speaking of his lost children.

"Clephane," said he, "if it had only been Clephane, I might have got over it—he was always a weed, poor fellow: one didn't build upon him. But that Frederick should go!—such a strong, hearty, merry little fellow! Oh! my boy—oh! my Fred!"

He struck his clenched hand violently on the table, and almost at the same moment laid his head down there with a burst of convulsive weeping. Then Eleanor saw Bridget—saw her as if in a dream. The young Welchwoman rose impetuously; with an echo of his own vehemence; with a passionate pity in her dark eyes and crimson cheek; rose and flung her arms wildly round his neck; rained kisses on his hair, his clenched hand, his half-hidden face.

"And oh!" sobbed she, "do you think I an't sorry for you? Do you think I an't sorry for his mother? Do you think I wouldn't bring back that poor lamb, if I could, with a cup of my own heart's blood? I would—I would; though you know you deceived me when you first brought me here. I'd bring him back with my marriage ring, if I had one; I'd bring him back with any thing I had to give, but the life of one of my own! Oh! don't moan him more—take comfort—kiss me—don't moan!"

And suddenly, as if to answer the wild tenderness of her manner, Sir Stephen leaned back with wide-spread arms, and caught her to his heart—caught her and held her in his fervent, locked embrace—as he had held Eleanor the day she fainted at Aspendale—and as he did so, he exclaimed—

"I would I had never had him, Bridget! I would I had never owned any thing, my girl, but you and yours; and if I could make you Lady Penrhyn to-morrow, by G—d, I'd do it!"

Eleanor heard it; she heard him say he wished he had never had wife or child; she heard him say, that if he could, he would make the woman his wife he then held in his arms; and who was comforting him—comforting him for the loss of Eleanor's own child!

Oh, life! how strange and heavy are some of your trials!

She rose: a cold dull dread of their coming out and finding her, gave her the sort of strength which in an evil dream enables us to fly from some overshadowing horror; to fly without escaping—but without being overtaken.

The day was worse; the branches bowed and swung in the storm as she passed; and the drifting rain beat across the path, drenching her with its hard cold shower. The late roses shook their wet scattered leaves on the stone steps of the terrace, as she ascended them; and when she closed the door, she heard the wind moan round the house with a dismal whistling sound; precursor of the long night of rain and wind that was to follow.

The late roses were all gone, and the frost was on the ground, before Eleanor again beheld the external aspect of nature. She had lain ill after that day—very ill—with one of those long low fevers to which she was subject. Did the heart of the woman at the lodge, the woman her husband loved, beat with the hope that Providence would make possible the declaration of his lips? Did Sir Stephen desire it to become possible? It seemed not; he seemed sorry for her; but she had heard—she could not forget what she had heard: and she did not want to live—only we die, all of us, at God's appointed time.

Eleanor lived; but the little Hindoo ayah, who had been her servant for so many years, fell ill about this time and died. Since the loss of the children (the second generation she had nursed) she had wandered about dejectedly; and after many months, often being found sitting at the foot of the stairs that led to the deserted, shut-up nursery, often being heard crying or crooning little monotonous Hindoo songs to herself; she shriveled up like a little willow-leaf before winter, and dropped as quietly in the grave as that leaf to the ground.

So Eleanor remained at Castle Penrhyn without any of those who had known her in early years, except old Sandy. Her mother and the ayah were dead, Godfrey at sea, Emma in her own little home at Ryde, Margaret in Italy. She lived alone; and she felt very lonely. She knew that Sir Stephen went every day to the lodge. She knew that the pretty boy went to school in Edinburgh with other gentlemen's sons; and that when he came home, though he never came up to the Castle, he would join Sir Stephen out shooting, to carry his game-bag or perform some other trivial task; and she had seen Sir Stephen pat him kindly and familiarly on the shoulder when they met; but that would have been nothing, if she had not heard what she could not forget.

Many young wives will say, Why did Eleanor bear this? They are very fond of saying: "Oh! if my husband were to strike me, I would leave him that moment." "If my husband were false to me, I would not remain under the shadow of his roof." But the question sometimes is, under the shadow of what other roof they are to sit; since they can not pitch a Bedouin tent in the world's desert, nor cross their own thresholds to climb up the door-step of other peoples' houses. They must have friends, home, money, a protection of some sort, somewhere to go to. Eleanor had none of these things; and perhaps it would be well for many a young wife in her anger—ay, even in her just, legitimate anger against the husband she was vowed to at the altar—if she had no other refuge to count upon, but was compelled, by the very force of friendless circumstance, to await the working out of God's will in her hard destiny, by her own fireside. I do not say it would be well, without exception; but in a vast majority of cases it would be well. Ties might thus remain fast which never were meant to be broken. Partings, might not take place, which are made irrevocable in the hurry of anger. Partings which even when they seem to lookers-on to be eagerly acquiesced in, often tug and strain at the hearts of those who have made them. Pride, and wrath, and self-vindication, would not work with mistaken kindness from others and a blind sort of justice, to ruin instead of redress; nor Margaret's lessons of tolerance be learned too late in life, to do aught but make us sigh to think how much better some we love might have guided their course, if tolerance had been the first, instead of the last lesson, their souls were willing to be taught.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DESTINY BETHINKS HERSELF OF TIB.

That virtue is sooner or later rewarded, is one of those grand truisms which we admit without disputing. There are, indeed, those who would faintly translate the proverb "Virtue is its own reward," into the meaning that it shall never obtain any recompense beyond a pleased self-consciousness; but I cling to the old belief (in the teeth of all evidence to the contrary), that something pleasant accrues to people for well-doing. I therefore hold that when destiny bethought herself of Tib Christison, and gave her the chief desire of her heart, she was rewarding that patient spinster for her many virtues.

Tib's long courtship had succeeded! She was Countess of Peebles—she was the Airle's Lady. Vain was Lady Macfarren's rage: the green bud of spinsterhood was spread into a glorious tulip. She patronized Lady Macfarren; her humility had vanished heaven knows where; to that limbo where the vanished humilities of many spinsters, old and young, go when they have outwitted the circle of blind relatives they dwelt among. She was no longer humble: she "knew her position." She was Dagoness to the Dagon in the gouty chair: she was head of the family! Tib! Tib, who had been under the very hindmost heel of the family; Tib, who had danced reels, and matched sixpenny ribbons, and slept in the garret at word of command!

She was Dagoness: and she did not even condescend to take the second place in that capacity; but carried herself with a pride like Wolsey's when he wrote of his king—"*Ego et Rex meus!*" A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: her price is above rubies. Oyez, oyez! ye relatives of Lord Peebles, be humble and vigilant; for Tib seals with the coronet she has fished for so long. And oh! dear me, how short Tib's memory grew, as to which of the Glencarrick group had been her friends, and which merely acquaintances! How infinitely more familiar did she appear to have been with the Duchess of Lanark and Lady Margaret, and even with young Lady Penrhyn, than with her superseded patroness, Lady Macfarren!

It would have done your heart good to see Tib. If ever fine feathers made fine birds, Tib's court plume was composed of them. How she swam past the Queen! What could the Queen do for Tib (unless Her Majesty were to abdicate in her favor) more than Tib had already done for herself, by her own unassisted exertions? Tib was intoxicated with success: Tib would not have envied the Emperor of Russia on his throne. Nothing but death could now take the Airle from her: and even that melancholy event could not take away her title. Tib was a Countess! Oh, you poor old maids, of Edinburgh, London, Paris, and the other principal cities of Europe, what meagre cats you are in comparison! Fall down and worship Tib, for she is a very goddess of old maids!

How she forgot her brother altogether; how she flouted her slavish little mother; how she cut all her humble friends, is not to be told. Nor how, the very day of the wedding, while her mother was yet weeping for joy in the best *bedroom of* Douglas's Hotel, out of which her daughter the countess had gone rustling downstairs in a magnificent white *gros-de-Naples* pelisse, she said to the Airle:

"My mother has been fishing sair for an invite to Peebles Pairk; but I'm for putting it off a little, for I'd wish her to know her place at once, and then there'll be no fashious doings afterward, when we'll be having grand company at the pairk."

The Airle smiled awkwardly. He felt—through all his flannels—something chill smite his heart, at this proof of his bride's capacity for ambition, and incapacity for home affections.

"Tib," said he seriously, "your mother's a kind little body, and I assure you that for my part—"

"Oh, it's a' settled noo, dear Lord Peebles; and I'd thank ye to ca' me Tabitha, since we're married; for Tib's just an unsightly name, and I'll have nane o' it."

The honeymoon was a period of great leisure with Tib. She employed it in writing many long letters, sealed with a well cut and deeply-impressed coronet, surmounting the name of Tabitha. She also read (many times in the day for the first three weeks) the announcement of her own marriage in the papers.

"Mortimer James George, Earl of Peebles, to Tabitha Emily, daughter of the late Peter Christison, Esq., of Dunleath;" followed by a description of the finery she wore; the name of the French milliner who made it up; the company who assisted at the ceremony; and a list of the bridesmaids who followed in her train. One Miss Bella Mackray had formerly been promised this honor, when both were still young, but Tib's august prospects forbade such an indignity.

"It was aye 'greed on, when we were young lassies," pleaded the sorrowful friend of the promoted one.

"Well, you're no a young lassie noo," observed Tib with a short laugh.

"'Deed, then, I'm as young for a bridesmaid, as you for a bride," tartly responded the irate spinster; but her heart immediately softening to her old playmate, she wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, and added, "however, I'm just glad and thankfu' for you're gude fortune, Tib; and I'll come to the wedding, though I'll no come as bridesmaid, and I'll come and see ye in ye're braw house afterward."

With this last proof of friendship, Tib could have willingly dispensed. From the first it was her intention to be more than ordinarily "select;" and when the homely companion of less elevated days, put the threat of a friendly visit into execution, her reception was discouraging. Patiently Miss Bella Mackray sate through two or three morning calls, which she imagined divided her from "a cantie crack" with the countess, smiling, or putting in a little observation now and then, if people turned their heads her way. At length they were alone, and Bella Mackray, giving a glad swing to her reticule, and drawing her chair nearer to that of her friend, said cheerfully:

"Noo then, we can talk."

But most irate were the feelings that swelled in the heart of the Airle's lady. That Bella should dare to come at all, without having first taken

the pleasure of the Dagoness as to the interview, was bad enough; but that she should be so ignorant of all the rules of fashionable society, or affect so presumptuous an intimacy, as to "sit out" the ladies of the Great World, who had called in the interval, was too monstrous! The conscious importance of her position; her four footmen, her velvet pile carpets, her satin curtains, her buhl book-cases, her sleek horses, her big carriage covered with armorial bearings, her diamonds, and her earl, all rose to Tib's memory in one crowded instant, and caused her almost to burst with indignation.

"What d'ye want?" said she, almost fiercely, to her former friend and companion. "What can ye want, that ye sit my visitors out in this extraordinary fashion, Miss Bell?"

The other fired up in a moment; and after giving a surprised stare of amazement and mortification, she said:

"'Deed, then, Tib, I cam' just to see you. I want naething o' ye. Want, indeed! I thank God and my gude father, I'm so weel set above want, that I'll no be obleeged, like some folk, to marry wi' an auld nightcap and an armfu' of flannels."

The wrath that flashed in Tib's keen green eyes, warned the quondam bridesmaid to beat an immediate retreat, which she did somewhat ignominiously. The great house door was shut behind her, by the great fat porter who could have swallowed the earl as the whale did Jonah, with a resounding grandeur; and she pattered away on foot, like a poor little mouse that had been driven out in the act of stealing crumbs of cheese; though in point of fact she had, as she said, wanted nothing except to see her magnificent friend, in her magnificent house, under her new magnificent circumstances.

She had seen all she was to see of that magnificence, for when Tib gave crumbs of cheese, or crumbs of comfort, it was not to such mice and "small deer" as Bella Mackray. No, Tib fed lions. Lions and tigers. Not those tamed by Van Amburgh, but those belonging to the purlieus of Hyde Park. Tib had one real advantage on her entrance into London society that she had lived in Edinburgh at a time when its circles, always highly educated and informed, were especially intellectual. In Tib's early youth she had known great minds; men who were landmarks of their time; monarchs not "of all they surveyed," but of all they "reviewed;" and though that debatable land has been since subdivided and shaken, like other great kingdoms, enough of the *prestige* of knowing those great names remained to Miss Tib.

So when she found any new clever man, wandering about the sandy deserts of good society, she baited a trap for him with one of these names; or she lassoed and brought them indeed to behave less like lions than like tame elephants, of whom it is said that they may be trained after a while to decoy one another.

For the clever men meeting other clever men at Peebles House, thought that mansion very agreeable; and had a vague notion (not altogether unfounded), that Tib must be very clever herself to collect so many clever men about her. And though Tib was very ignorant and illiterate (how ignorant, nobody ever knew but Tib), she showed herself to be wiser in her generation than the children of light; and people greatly respected Tib, and Tib's French cook; and ate Tib's dinners whenever she asked them.

And Tib was never known in all her life, to omit any one the world had remarked; or to single out any one for notice, not previously remarkable; or to give one disinterested invitation for the mere pleasure of seeing a friend; or to do any thing without an *arrière pensée;* and Tib throve prodigiously.

And in one respect Tib behaved as big boys do at school, who avenge upon little boys what they themselves endured while in the position of fags; for Tib took especial pleasure in fagging and tyrannizing over old maids; insomuch that it was quite pleasant to watch her, and she had more toad-eaters than any one would well believe. Only one old maid having trod in Tib's footsteps, and married a duke, was pronounced to have been her dear friend and companion of her youth—and took brevet rank accordingly.

And when the London season was over, and the flock of lions was quietly dispersing, and going to prowl singly or in lesser groups in the country, Tib took out a little gold and vellum memorandum book, and arranged whom she would receive, and where she would visit. And among the houses to which Tib naturally offered to go, was Penrhyn Castle; and young Lady Penrhyn replied, that Sir Stephen was going to Wales for a couple of months, but that she believed Lady Macfarren would be at the Castle, and that the Duke and Duchess of Lanark would also pay them a visit; and so would Lady Margaret, who was shortly expected to return from Italy; that she did not know exactly when that would be; but that she would be very happy to receive Tib and Lord Peebles meanwhile, whenever it suited them. And it suited Tib to go there about the middle of the month of September.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE HOUR OF GLOOM.

EARLY in September, before Tib or Lady Macfarren or any of her visitors had arrived when she was yet all alone in the large, lonely house, which no longer echoed in its dim corridors the merry laugh and pattering steps of children, Eleanor was sitting in the window of the sunny little bower-room, once allotted to Tib when the Castle was full of company; the room in which Tib had found the copy of verses she showed to Lady Macfarren; and the scraps of sketches, and patterns for arbors and trellis-work, and designs for school-house and cottages, and rules for a general village oven, where the poor might bake, and other evidences of the employment of Eleanor's leisure.

Tib would have found nothing new. She might have ferreted in vain; no trace of occupation was there. The housemaid who arranged the room, found it day by day as orderly as she left it; no scraps of clipping and cutting from mounted drawings, littered the carpet; no light tissue-paper floated through the window, giving her the trouble of running down the great staircase, and begging Sandy to see if what had flown into the garden was of any consequence.

Eleanor's occupation was gone, like Othello's. The main-springs of life were broken.

Nothing is more common than to hear it said to persons in affliction or depression, "Oh! but you should employ yourself; you should resort to some of your usual occupations: I really wonder that you, who have so many resources, should allow your mind to sink in this way." Alas! our resources are of very little service in hours of *real* affliction! The soul is palsied, not the hands; we can not employ ourselves if we would. There is an energy in happiness, that the wretched can not feel. To what end should we labor? What does any thing signify? Why should we shake the sands in the monotonous course of time? Let the hours go by; let them bear them with us, or leave us behind in the grave; what care we? Only let there be peace and silence; no turmoil round us; no exertion expected from us—*no* exertion—even that which we were once willing to make for good and holy objects!

This is a diseased state of mind; this is despair; this is what has been felt probably in a greater or less degree, by many who will read these pages. It was the state of Eleanor's mind at the time I am describing. She could do nothing; she did not attempt to do any thing; she desired nothing; she feared nothing: if her heart roused itself at all, it did so on those days when the post brought a letter from Margaret, at Naples; but even then it was but a faint rally. Even Margaret's sweet musical sentences had lost their power, in some measure. Bright, happy Margaret; beloved and welcomed at Naples, cherished by the old duchess, yearned for at home by her noble-hearted brother; looked up to and revered like some shrined saint, by her little daughter—by her daughter, who did not die like Eleanor's children, nor even pine with a sick life like Clephane; but lived and smiled, a rosy copy of her lovely mother, and sat in the sunshine of love and happiness all day long; oh! how should Margaret understand what was working at Eleanor's heart?

So Eleanor thought; and therefore in her letters she would not speak of it. But she was wrong. Sympathy is the child of tenderness, not of experience. Those who are quick to feel, will sympathize with a sorrow they have never experienced; and those who are slow to feel, will be no nearer sympathy when they have apparently endured a similar grief, than they were before. Margaret had never lost a child; but not the less did her bright eyes brim with tears when she saw children at play who reminded her of Eleanor's. She had never been unloved and lonely, but she could guess from the strength of her own love what such a blank might be. If she had seen Eleanor, she would have comprehended all at a glance; but she did not see her; she only read her quiet letters; and she wrote to her of her schools, her plans, her garden, and her poor; hoping that her dejection was soothed and broken by employment, and knowing well that grief must run its course: that it must, according to the beautiful, untranslatable expression in Schiller, where Wallenstein laments for Max, be "grieved down" by time, before it ends.

So Eleanor sat idle and listless at the window *of the little bower-room*. She had lost her resemblance to the picture at Lansdowne House. The restlessness, the bitter energy, the *youth* of her sorrow were gone. It was a passive face—a face that would have told a dreary tale to physiognomists. No kind, busy Mrs. Christison came hurrying up stairs, as in the old days at Glencarrick, to try and alter its expression by homely sympathy. No fierce sister-in-law reproved. No friend comforted. God and his good angels alone saw that face, in the holy autumnal light; and He alone judges when the cup of human sorrow shall be pronounced to be full.

Through Eleanor's mind the dreary reflection had just passed, that at least *suffering* was over for her in this world; that nothing more could come now, but death—death not called for with a passionate, impatient apostrophe, as in the verses Tib had read, but waited for with a very real calm. For to the coming of death Eleanor felt indifferent, as to all other things.

It was at this moment that old Sandy entered, after twice knocking at the door unheard. Eleanor turned her head; she thought some directions about the garden were required, but she was startled as she looked on the old man. His face was white as ashes; his weak eyes looked as though a burning light were held behind them.

"Gracious Heaven, Sandy! what ails you?"

"Hech, mileddy! hech! there's ane come wi' a letter for your leddyship, and it's intrusted to my han', mileddy—to my han'."

The idea of some terrible accident crossed Eleanor's imagination. She had had evil news before—what now?

"What is it, Sandy? Pray speak out. Pray give me the letter. I am not strong, and it makes me feel faint and ill, to be kept in suspense. Has Sir Stephen—give me the letter."

The old man still retained it a moment, in his trembling grasp.

"Mileddy, it's no a letter frae Sir Stephen, nor any ways frae hame. It's a letter frae furrin' pairts."

"Oh, my poor Margaret!" shrieked Eleanor, as she started from her seat.

Sandy held her by her dress.

"Mileddy, ye'll forgie an auld man, an' hear him. Tak this letter; it's no frae Italy, but Ameriky. He's no deed, mileddy—Mr. Stuart's no deed! It's a' richt, and when he dees there's no man 'll speak ill o' his banes. Here's the letter, mileddy; and a man brocht it and speered for me, and wadna come in, but waited for me at the ludge. I gaed and tuk it frae him, and he's to ca' back in an hoor—up frae the village, mileddy—to speak wi' yere leddyship; and, eh, mileddy, I'm just daft wi' the news; just daft—clean daft."

There was little occasion for Sandy to give this just description of his own state, for he seemed indeed in a condition little short of madness. He snapt his fingers, he danced, he wept, he stood still and trembled; and finally, as the marble face of his beautiful mistress turned upon him from glancing over the letters, with eyes that did not seem to see, and white parted lips that did not seem to breathe—he dropped on his knees in a paroxysm of terror, and exclaimed,

"Oo, mileddy, dinna dee—dinna dee till ye've heard a'; dinna dee, for I told it just as I was

bid to tell it. Gude save us, and keep us! Tak a sup o' water, and dinna dee."

Eleanor did not faint; she only retreated slowly to her seat in the window, and read the letter again. Then she asked Sandy when the messenger who brought it said he would return; and desired that when he came he might be shown into the breakfast-room, and that refreshments might be put there, and she would come and speak with him; and then, and not till then, Eleanor burst into tears, and held out her hand to poor old Sandy, which he took, weeping and trembling, and praying to the Lord for her peace and comfort, and for "a' blessins to be shooered doon on her by nicht an' by day;" but she did not hear his words, for her eyes were riveted once more on the open letter in her hand.

Read the letter, Eleanor, in the old, well-known writing, unseen for eight long years!—read the missive from the long-lost friend in a far-away land, whose death you lamented in vain! Life is not empty, though full of pain; life is not hopeless, though full of loss. Live now; live, if only to answer that letter; that long letter, making clear the darkness and misery of the past. Live! there *is* a future, even on this side the grave! Live to hear from him again! Live to question the friend to whom he intrusted this missive, and who has stood in his presence—looked in his eyes—touched his hand—at their farewell-greeting, only a few weeks since, when he left him in America!. Live for the vague, faint, possible hope (since he is not dead) of seeing him once more, before you surrender up your life. Life! which half-an-hour ago seemed so valueless, that you cared not when the summons should come that would end it.

The letter was, indeed, a strange one. In the hour of this meditated suicide, David Stuart had been rescued by a feeble hand. Old Mr. Fordyce had been attending a dying woman in the village all night, and crossed that part of the park by the roaring Linn, as his nearest way home, just as day began to break. He was in time to cry out—to clutch—and to save. The explanation between the two friends was terrible—was miserable; but the old clergyman forgot not mercy in his teaching. He argued with David, in the name of that Creator into whose presence the sinner would have madly rushed.

"Mr. Stuart," said he, solemnly, "I have just come from a sinner's death-bed; the death-bed of a woman you may remember, as bearing a very bad character in the village. I received her confession; she admitted having poisoned her husband; and destroyed, and buried in the wood, a child she always affirmed to have been carried off by the gipsies. You have gone through the storm of life this night; and I, the storm of death. I sat, for hours, listening to that woman's feeble, savage shrieks to God for mercy—for *time*, if it was but one day! I never, in all my experience as a clergyman, heard such terrified craving for life. She died with starting eyes, and clenched hands; choking—cursing—wailing—struggling; and earnestly I prayed with her, for most unfit was she to die. It pleased God, nevertheless, to take her as she was; no time was granted her; no other day of delay and respite dawned for her perishing soul; in the dark night it was required of her! Mr. Stuart, as I stepped into the fresh morning light, out of that dreadful death-chamber, I prayed for all sinners; that we might all have time to repent and prepare. I little thought I was then praying for you. You would fling away your life as worthless—as useless. Man, the life God gave you, he will find a purpose for, though it be but the purpose of repentance! Kneel down, and thank him for it. After the scene I have witnessed this night, the fact that life remains to you—though nothing else were granted—seems of itself, to me, an unspeakable blessing. Up! and face the future, whatever it may be. You have defrauded the widow and the orphan; your life is theirs; if it suffice but to win back a tithe of what they have lost through you, you will not have lived in vain!"

As a light, trembling, like the star at the summit of some hideous winding cavern, showing a way out into a world of upper light and air, to a lost traveler—so fell the words of the good old man, on the soul of the miserable and despairing David Stuart. Before they parted, Mr. Fordyce, producing an inkhorn from his pocket, wrote a few hurried lines to a merchant at Quebec, introducing Stuart by the assumed name of Lindsay, and entreating his friend, if possible, to recommend him for employment; as one who had had misfortunes, but was very able and intelligent. It was agreed that he should write to Mr. Fordyce once a year, and that the fact of his being yet alive, should remain a secret buried forever between them. A secret it was doomed, indeed, to be; for the agitation, fatigue, and horror of the night, produced in the wearied old man, that attack of paralysis, from which he never rallied even enough to tell Eleanor (as he apparently had endeavored to do) this great alleviation of the pain she experienced.

David Stuart learned from the English papers the death of the gentle incumbent of Aspendale, and the marriage of Sir Stephen Penrhyn with his ward. He had no reason to think it other than a happy lot. He remembered all the rational praises Lady Margaret had bestowed on Eleanor's suitor, all the explanations Sir Stephen himself had given in his letter of proposal. He treated the idea of any other attachment, on Eleanor's part, very lightly. Poor child! she had been too nervous to declare on whom her choice had rested, but the preference could hardly disturb her future destiny, which had been grounded on the ball-room acquaintance of a single season in London, and had escaped the observation of Lady Margaret: for had not Margaret expressly declared that the nearest approach to preference that Eleanor had shown, was to Sir Stephen himself? He was easy, therefore, as to Eleanor's fate. The burden of reproach and bitter shame was all he had to bear, and he carried it with him night and day.

The merchant to whom Mr. Fordyce had addressed him, was engaged in speculations in the fur trade. The employment he offered David was to traffic for furs with the Indians of the interior. It was a life of danger, hardship, and distress: David made it also one of penury. He denied himself all that was not a bare subsistence; he lived on just what would keep life in him—that life which he had sworn to Mr. Fordyce to preserve, as far as human care could

preserve it. During the brief and accidental intercommunion with comrades and countrymen in the way of his trade, he was sneered at and shunned, as one unnaturally stingy and uncompanionable. But his time was passed principally among savages, whose dealings were confined to a few interpreted words, in the management of his employer's interests. That employer was satisfied; and his profits were beyond his most sanguine calculations. But what were profits in the fur trade to a man who had risked and lost a fortune like Eleanor's?

The events of real life are often stranger than fiction. In a far-away settlement, in a log cabin, with no companion but a weakly lad, the last of five sons who had dropped off, one by one, of fever, David found a little eager old man, who instantly recognized and spoke to him by his real name. He haughtily denied it. The man eyed him for some time in silence, as he stood there, in a costume half-savage, half-European.

"Mr. Stuart," said he, "your appearance is too remarkable, and the occasion on which I last saw you was too painful not to have impressed you on my recollection. I am rather surprised that you do not remember me; but they say I am much altered. I am the partner in the house of Nevil and Co., who was sent to meet you at Marseilles!"

A groan of execration burst from David's lips, as he turned to leave the hut. The other caught him by the arm:

"Hear me! I tell you now, as I told you then, that a little courage and patience would have prevented all that took place; that even now, courage and patience might retrieve much. I told poor Nevil so: it was to no purpose. He was a feeble-souled creature, and he shot himself! I am convinced, if we had all stood our ground together, at the time I saw you at Marseilles, such a catastrophe need not have occurred. It published our disgrace; it involved matters which required the coolest investigation, in a shameful mystery; no one could explain them; for Nevil had been, as you know, principal acting-partner in our firm.

"This is the way mercantile men are lost. A man gets into difficulties, and he is thrown into prison, where he can neither help himself or his creditors; or he shoots himself to escape censure—to escape shame—as if a man's life were not, in such a case, as much among his liabilities as any thing else he possesses—as if he were not bound, while he exists, and exists with sane faculties, to devote those faculties and that life to the interests of those whom his folly has ruined. Courage, Mr. Stuart, courage and patience are as necessary in the mercantile profession as in any other. What would be thought of the colonel of a regiment who destroyed himself in a difficult position on the field? What of a ship's captain who leaped overboard in a storm? Why, the regiment might have cut its way through, the ship might have floated, under other guidance! Why should a mercantile man be a coward? I'm not a coward, Mr. Stuart. I'm a little, poor, feeble, unhappy old man, living in strangely altered circumstances, having seen heavy afflictions: but I'm not a coward. And I'm not a thief: I declare before God I never had a dishonest thought, and I don't believe poor Nevil had either; I'm sure he hadn't; I'll clear his memory, and I'll help his children yet! I've lost a good many of my own: I've lost four as fine lads as you ever saw, that I thought would be company and help here, through fever and sickness; but there's two in India hard at it, Mr. Stuart; sifting accounts, getting the Indian partners to book-up, getting law matters looked into, getting embarrassments explained; in constant correspondence with me by Halifax. We've gone on that way, for four years and more; law matters, and money matters, and the affairs of a bankrupt firm, ain't settled in a day; especially when the acting partner shoots himself without arranging or docketing a single paper in his escritoire; but I tell you things are brightening, Mr. Stuart; things are brightening; and twelve months more may see us all in a very different position from what we are now."

A moan from the sickly lad in the corner of the hut, roused David from the amazed stare with which he was contemplating the little, eager, wiry, energetic old man. They both turned—

"Ah! my poor boy," said Mr. Weston, "if it wasn't for his health, we should do cheerily enough. Well, boy, well?" and he lifted him into a sitting posture.

"I thought I was in India," said the lad, looking confusedly round; "I was dreaming of India; under the palm-trees, at Benares; the lovely palm-trees in the sun. Oh, God! this is a cold lone place!" and with a weaker burst of weeping, immediately followed by the ague shiver of his fever, the lad sunk his head on his hands.

"This is bad, Harry," said the old man; "don't give way. We'll go back to India some day; we'll go back to India."

Then, turning wistfully to David, he said.

"I feel like Abraham with young Isaac on the hill; and I feel," added he, shaking off the momentary depression, "as strong a confidence in God! We none of us know what sacrifices God will demand of us, or how He will help us out of them; but we know that His hand is over us, and that we are to do His will."

David himself could not have told, why at that instant he remembered Margaret. Something in the turn of the sentence, and its spirit of devout cheerfulness, recalled to him that sweet voice, that matchless face, in the dull log-cabin far away, with the withered old man and his sick pallid son. He assisted the latter to rise; he spoke to him; he told him that he, too, had been in India; he tried to interest, to cheer him.

The lad looked at him with pleasure; with surprise.

"You've a very agreeable way of helping, sir," said he; "you're as gentle as a woman. I shall think I've got a nurse." He leaned back as he spoke, with a fitful smile.

"I knew it," said the old man, eagerly; "I knew things would brighten. I have not seen Harry smile—not, the Lord knows, when! I take it as a good omen; I take meeting with you, Mr. Stuart, as a good omen. I've no doubt we shall have good news next time my correspondent at Halifax gets the letters. '*Nil desperandum*,' Mr. Stuart, that's my motto. Things will brighten, sir; things will brighten."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WAVERING.

THINGS did brighten. Not within twelve months from the time David Stuart and Mr. Weston met; not till eight long years from the date of Eleanor's marriage and of Stuart's supposed suicide; never—to the extent that the sanguine old man had hoped and expected; but enough, by the forfeit of all private property, to replace matters in a great measure as they were; enough to rescue Nevil's memory from the imputation of more than rashness and incapability; enough to pay back that monstrous loan which David had made for his own advantage, in the hope of re-purchasing Dunleath; enough to enable old Mr. Weston to sail for India, with a son who had come to meet and congratulate him, and in company with the delicate lad, to whom in his occasional visits to the log-cabin in the far west, David had become so welcome and so dear.

"I will never forget you, sir," said he, as they shook hands; "I shall think of you in India. I wish you well back in your own country."

In his own country! David had not the courage, and independence, of that lad's father. How could he face the shame, unravel all the past, become an object of malevolent attention among the few who knew him? The guardian of Sir John Raymond's daughter, who had speculated with her fortune and lost it; and then by a lucky turn of the cards, was able to compound with his deserved fate and pay it back again!

In his own country: what country had he? Was not the announcement of Tib's marriage to Lord Peebles a sufficient indication of his homelessness?

"*Tabitha, daughter of the late Peter Christison, Esq., of Dunleath?*"

Of Dunleath! nonsense; how was he Christison "of Dunleath?" It requires to know Scotchmen and the feudal memories that still attach themselves to the possession of hereditary property there, to comprehend how, even sitting in the merchant's counting-house at Quebec, or trafficking among North American savages; after all sorts of great and small misfortunes, there was still strength in David's heart, for irritation at this assumption; there was still room in his heart for a sigh for "bonny Dunleath!"

"No! to his own country he would not, could not go: that was the most impossible of all feasible things!

But when he had written his long statement and explanation, making known how he had been saved, and enabled to replace the fortune he had risked; when he had sealed and directed this to Eleanor; a great thirst came over David's soul! To see her, to look once more in her face, with the weight off his heart that had wrapped it in leaden shame so many years; to hear her say she forgave him; to judge for himself if she seemed happy.

He thought of her, as the trembling girl that tried in vain to name to him the object of her fancied love; he thought of her, as the sick child he had nursed through the long fever when he quarreled with Godfrey on her account. He thought of her, as the strange intelligent little being who had greeted him when first he came from India; who had spoken to him of old Mr. Fordyce; who had read to him in the garden the sermon she was so proud of having copied neatly out: "*Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.*" He remembered the sound of the child's silver voice, as if it were but yesterday he heard it. He remembered her fondness for him; her sweet companionable nature. And David sighed heavily: it was so long since he had seen any one that loved him!

He read over the answers to the inquiries he had caused to be made, respecting those whose interests were bound up in the events which had taken place. Lady Raymond was dead; Captain Marsden was at sea; Lady Margaret was in Italy; Sir Stephen Penryhn he had never seen; nor the Duke of Lanark, who had been finishing his education abroad when he knew Margaret.

He might go and see Eleanor: if but for a day, if but for an hour, he would be content. He would see her, and immediately return. No letter could give him the repose his heart wanted. He wanted to look on her face, to stand in her presence a forgiven man. Was it, indeed, so utterly impossible?

The waverer rose, and took two or three hurried turns up and down the apartment. Then he reached down his hat, and went out. He strode swiftly and breathlessly through the long winding street, with its steep flights of steps, that led from the merchant's warehouse in the Lower Town, till he reached the citadel over Cape Diamond. On that height he stood and gazed, with a sense of imprisonment and wild desire, like that of the chained eagle at St. Helena.

When at length he descended, and forsook the fortifications in the Upper Town, he went to make arrangements for his departure for England in the name by which Mr. Fordyce had introduced him—the name of Lindsay, the only one he was known by at Quebec.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RECOGNITION.

ALL that there was to learn or to know of David Stuart's past history, Eleanor had read and re-read a dozen times before his messenger reappeared at the Castle. She had ceased at length to con over that strange and welcome epistle: she was sitting once more unoccupied (but oh! how different in mood), at the window of the bower-room, when Sandy came to summon her with the intimation that the stranger guest had arrived. The old man's agitation had not subsided; he shook from head to foot as he delivered his message; he looked doubtfully at Eleanor, as if wondering whether she had borne the great news, and retained perfect sanity; and in truth Sandy seemed the more discomposed of the two.

Eleanor smiled at him as she rose; smiled, but uttered no word. She passed onward, swift and trembling, down the steps of the lower room, across the foot of the great staircase, through the magnificent oak dining-hall, into the breakfast-room adjoining. Her foot never faltered, her strength never failed. She was there, to speak with the gentleman who had so

lately left David Stuart; who had seen him, living and safe, before he sailed for England.

In the impossible conventionalities of the stage, how little disguise is necessary! How flimsily vailed by all the passionate and masterly acting that has been thrown away upon such scenes, is the great untruth of their construction: when some unexpected alteration, sometimes a mere change of costume, is supposed sufficient to blind the eye of love—to cloud the power of memory! Is the voice forgotten, that once thrilled to the heart's core? Is the individuality which marks out every one by some peculiar habit of gesture or carriage, effaced by the lapse of years? Is there any difference which shall in real life so bar out old associations of thought, that a friend once familiarly known shall stand before us a stranger? The very contrary is the case; the minutest and most trivial things will enable us to recognize them; and one astonished glance will give us back all that years and time had taken away.

As Eleanor entered, her eyes swollen with tears, looking searchingly for the person she expected to meet, the figure of a gentleman struck her, leaning by the fireplace. His back was toward her; his arm was on the mantle-piece, and his head was bowed down on it; his other hand rested on his hip. He did not move; her step, noiseless and swift, had not disturbed him; he stood there, and she gazed.

A slight convulsive gasp—a pause of intolerable bewilderment—and Eleanor recognized him. Know him! she would have known him only by his hand—that slight, delicate hand that had so often smoothed her hair down in childhood—whose agonized pressure, the day of their farewell, had hung like a steel bar on her heart!

"Merciful Heaven! David Stuart! It is you, yourself!"

He turned. It was the same face, altered by years and suffering. He looked on her with the living glance of those long-lost eyes. There was no embrace—no gladness; they did not even shake hands. Panting, her heart fluttering like a frightened bird, Eleanor stood still and shuddered; while David Stuart's lips parted with a ghastly smile. He was the first to recover himself; he came forward, and, taking her hand, kissed her lightly on the forehead.

"You forgive me, Eleanor; you forgive me all. I knew it; I knew I could rely on your noble nature. I have lived for this hour—not in vain!"

Then Eleanor crept into his arms, and clung and wept there, as they cling and weep who dream that human love and human kindness can shelter them from the storms of life; and while she wept, her one gleam of happiness, and last great sorrow, coming over her soul in a gush of recollected grief, she murmured to him:

"Oh! I had two such sweet children; but I lost them both—they were both drowned!" and looking up into his eyes, shining down upon her in all the depth of their pity, it seemed to her once more that she beheld the face of her guardian angel. Yes, her better angel—come to rescue and comfort her in her despair. Scorned of men in vain, exiled in vain, disgraced in vain, he stood there, beloved, revered, idolized, in that woman's heart, which leaped at once from misery into a *world of gladness, as she* wept in his arms. Oh! he was gentle—gentle and kind; with no dreaded embrace, no human caress, did those arms seem to enfold her, until her agitation subsided, and they were able to talk of the past and the future like two friends.

Sweet was her sleep that night; pleasant the waking; fresh and delicious the air of the morning, as she flung open the window, and looked out over the distant hills, and knew that he was near—that he had rested under the very shadow of her own roof; that she would see him again, as she used to see him at Aspendale, in the young, happy days that were past.

And yet there was something very opposite to that frank, easy happiness, in what was now proposed; for though, after Eleanor's tender and affectionate reception of him, David at once relinquished the idea of immediate departure, and remodeled his notions of merely receiving her assurances of forgiveness as a preface to his own farewell, he steadily adhered to his intention of preserving his incognito in the land to which, for her sake only, he had returned. No reasoning that Eleanor could urge altered this. He would not brave the shame; and incur the cold curiosity of some, the open contempt of others. Eleanor must learn to call him Mr. Lindsay; to his ear it would sound but natural, for he had been called Mr. Lindsay by every one round him for more than eight years. No one knew him but Sandy, and the poor old man would sooner die than betray him. Lady Raymond, Godfrey Marsden and his wife, the Hindoo ayah, all who might have recognized him, were removed by death or absence.

Nothing was to be gained by admitting himself to be David Stuart; a great deal was to be suffered, of prejudice, of disesteem, of discomfort. Eleanor pleaded hard to be allowed to write it to Margaret, but even this was refused.

"It will not add any thing to her friendly gladness at all the rest of your intelligence, Eleanor, to know that I have been here; I shall be gone before she will be on the spot; and if you reflect for a moment on the chances to which all letters, and especially foreign letters, are exposed, you will see that you might as well advertise my arrival in the papers at once. No, let me be still in America, for all but you. Let me be Mr. Lindsay, the Quebec merchant, as I have been through so many miserable years that I almost seem transformed, even to myself. Write to Sir Stephen that Mr. Lindsay has arrived at the Castle. It will be, perhaps, a convenience to him that we should go through the arrangement of money matters, and the explanations which that will involve, here. As Mr. Lindsay, acting for David Stuart, Mr. Weston, and the representatives of Mr. Nevil, I can meet Sir Stephen on equal ground. It would be painful—impossible—to me to meet him, if he knew me. Is he kind and generous, Eleanor? Is he all that Margaret promised me, for the dear ward of other days? Did you learn to love him quickly and well? Has he been to you the providence of your life, after my crime left you without protection? Are you happy with him—quite happy?"

Eleanor hesitated. "When I first married," said she, with some embarrassment, "I made them all promise not to speak of you. I am

afraid I must make you give the same sort of promise. Do not let us talk of Sir Stephen."

David Stuart looked at her with sorrowful surprise: with eager interest. She made an effort to speak playfully. "You must not therefore think that I am married to a sort of Bluebeard. All the keys of the Castle are mine;" but the tone could not deceive him.

She was not happy. She did not love this man. Did he deserve her love? if he did, what a misery! To call this perfect, kindly, lovely creature his, and not be beloved by her. David felt a strange sort of compassion for Sir Stephen Penrhyn. But perhaps she loved him, and he maltreated her—maltreated Eleanor! No, that was not possible. It did not seem possible, as David gazed on her now; shyly turning from him, seeming to look out at the view, but feeling his eyes on her face. It was not possible. What could man imagine of perfection, that she did not fulfill? He knew her disposition; he had known it from a child. He saw the beauty of her womanhood, and he thought it the very ideal of human loveliness and grace. It must be Eleanor who, after all, had found it impossible to love the wealthy suitor whom her friends thought a fit choice! Had she clung, then, to the romantic fancy of her girlhood, and thought, as girls will think, of some romance and illusion of preference, to the destruction of her real happiness? Who could that preference have been for? David Stuart lost himself in a maze of conjecture.

"Do not look at me with those questioning eyes," said Eleanor, at last. "I ask you as a favor, not to talk of my husband to me; I am not very happy; but I have no doubt far better women have had much harder fates than I could complain of; and if I say so much at once, it is that I may say no more, even to you, on this subject."

"I will promise you not to talk of Sir Stephen, Eleanor. I admit" (and this was said with some bitterness) "that I have lost my right to question you. I must remember you are not the child Eleanor of other days, nor I the guardian whose trust was so abused. We will not speak of him. As to looking at you with questioning eyes, or any other eyes, it will be a more difficult promise to make; it is so long since I have seen your face; and it is such a beautiful face!"

"Mine!" said Eleanor, with a sad smile. "I am so altered: and I am so pale. But I remember—" here Eleanor stopped short; she was going to say she remembered his complimenting her on her beauty, with the half-heard verse from Spenser on board the yacht: that she recollected the lines:

> "And every spirit, as it is more pure,
> And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
> So it the fairer body doth procure
> To habit it."

But it seemed absurd to remind him of his own compliment, and although the days in which she had loved David Stuart had long been a mournful dream, and nothing more, there was something in the memory of that day which embarrassed her. She paused, and David only answered:

"Do you think paleness a defect in beauty? I don't. I think brilliancy an imperfect form of beauty. I think it the fault of one of the most beautiful faces I used to know—Lady Margaret Fordyce. I wonder is she still beautiful."

Yes; Eleanor could assure him that Margaret was still beautiful. And she thought of the days when the beauty of her lovely chaperon thrilled her soul with a vague jealousy, and when, if she had known that David thought brilliancy an imperfect form of beauty, it would have comforted her heart.

She wrote to Sir Stephen, that which David desired should be written; and Sir Stephen's reply was amply satisfactory. He requested if Mr. Lindsay could spare the time, that he would remain at the Castle; that it would save Sir Stephen the trouble of a journey to London after his arrival, and that in the mean while he would write to his man of business in Edinburgh to meet him. Sir Stephen added that Eleanor was at liberty now to give directions for the transfer of the money which had been Sir John Raymond's legacy to Godfrey, back to her brother. His whole letter was written in high good-humor, in the most buoyant state of spirits, and so open an exultation at the recovery of Eleanor's fortune, she was puzzled to think how any one to whom money, being rich, was yet so precious, could have married her without it.

Eleanor laid the letter down. "Do you know that Sir Stephen's man of business in Edinburgh is Mr. Christison? Either Mr. Christison or Mr. Malcolm will come. Are you not afraid of being recognized by Mr. Christison?"

"I never saw any of the Christisons. I treated for Dunleath through lawyers and by letter. I tell you, Eleanor, that it is more likely I should meet an acquaintance on the upper range of the Himalaya mountains, than here in Scotland. I have lived in Italy, in India, at Aspendale, and in America: I have never lived, except as a boy, in Scotland. If you recollect, when you asked me, long ago, whether I had seen any old friends in Edinburgh, I was obliged to admit I *had* no old friends: a sorry admission: but one which is rather satisfactory than otherwise at present."

For one happy week, Eleanor and David Stuart remained alone at Castle Penrhyn, again they read, and walked, and rode, and sketched together; and Eleanor looked over the drawings made of wild American woods, with their twisted foliage, impermeable undergrowth, swinging leaves, and grand solemn trees, reminding her of Bryant's line:

> "The groves were God's first temples."

She copied the likenesses of Indian squaws and their children; she studied the rich coloring of the maple and oak in fragments of forest scenery. She wondered over the majestic lakes and waterfalls. She felt as if she saw, in the new world, the world she was accustomed to magnified a thousandfold. Then she took David to see her schools, and her poor; proudly and fondly she impressed upon him, that to this and the early life at Aspendale, she owed all her ideas of usefulness, all her practical power of realizing those ideas. Ever fighting against David Stuart's morbid sense of his degradation, she enlarged on the happy, consoling thought, that while he was pursuing his almost hopeless career as a petty free-trader among unlettered savages, he was in fact the missionary of com-

fort and hope among a people he had never seen. "For I owe it all to you," she would say; "but for you I should have been a little languid, frivolous, foolish girl; you taught me to think and feel—to feel that there were others besides myself in this teeming world; to think how I could best serve them. There is nothing here that is not an enlarged copy of what you made me do at Aspendale, that is not built out of your words, in days when your words were my books, and your will my guide. It is you, who have been, in fact, the providence of these poor people, for they had been much neglected before I came."

And David smiled and sighed; and felt, not that he was the Providence of Eleanor's poorer tenants, but that if ever Heaven selected an earthly instrument for doing good, that resembled one of the angels, it was the fair, unselfish creature that walked by his side. And every day that passed, Eleanor seemed to David more perfect than the day before; and a gnawing and restless anxiety to see, and make acquaintance with the husband of whom they never spoke—of whom it was agreed they never were to speak—took possession of him, and haunted him by night and by day.

But Sir Stephen was still in Wales, and not expected for three or four weeks. And the solitude of Eleanor was broken first by other arrivals; the arrival of Lady Macfarren, of Mr. Malcolm, as Mr. Christison's representative; the Duke and Duchess of Lanark; one or two neighbors to meet them; and the magnificent Tabitha, Countess of Peebles, daughter of the late Peter Christison, of Dunleath, who came spluttering up to the portico, with four horses and two tiny postillions, in little velvet jockey caps, just as some of the party were returning from a walk. Among them was the Duchess of Lanark, looking very pretty, in a plain, close straw bonnet; and David, who with instinctive courtesy, lifted some cloak, mantle, or shawl, which entangled itself under Tib's feet, while she was descending and condescending. Struck by his graceful and distinguished bearing, and aware that two noblemen, as yet unknown to her, were among the guests at the Castle, Tib shook her fair curls, and smiled her most gracious smile; but having received from the Duchess of Lanark the information that it was only Mr. Lindsay of Quebec, Tib froze like a pond in winter; retracted her smile, and became totally unaware of Mr. Lindsay's existence. In which she did not resemble the Duchess of Lanark, who, being a duke's daughter, and a duke's wife, was less troubled with the recollection of her grandeurs than vulgar Tib, and cared little who people were, as long as they were clever, elegant, and handsome. I regret to add to this (which I consider to be meritorious and proper behavior), a fact which may subject the duchess to the critisisms of the censorious; and that is, that in all her life she had never behaved with such coquetry as she did to the supposed Mr. Lindsay. She honestly thought him the handsomest and most agreeable person she had ever seen; and something of a false romance hit her fancy to send the poor Quebec merchant pining back to the far West; having seen such a *duchess, in* the Highlands of Scotland, as never *could be effaced from his* memory! So she made him write verses in her album (for she said all Americans had a natural gift of poetry), and she told him the story of the putting down the clans, and forbidding the wearing of tartans, and a number of other little particulars of Scottish history; which wicked David had heard before, but somehow contrived to appear as if he was listening to for the first time.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TIB'S SHEAF.

THERE is something disjointed in falsehood. Never yet was there a lie so well constructed, that the mortar held to all its bricks. It seemed easy enough to arrange that David Stuart should pass as Mr. Lindsay, during the brief stay he intended to make at a place where no one could recognize him; that Eleanor should call him Mr. Lindsay, and that he should answer to a name which he had already borne for eight years. It seemed easy to reckon on old Sandy's fidelity; the only quarter in which the chance of detection could possibly have been feared. And yet unexpected difficulties and embarrassments, started up like thorns in the path that seemed so smooth and simple; and petty vexations which they had never counted on, threatened to neutralize all foresight as to the dangers which alone they had guarded against.

Tib's eye was on them!

It is easy for a gentleman, whose name is Mr. Stuart, to call himself Lindsay; but it is not easy for two people who have known each other intimately for a series of years, to behave as if they were mutually strangers. No guarding of the eye, or guarding of the tongue, can do this. There is a halo of gentle familiarity round people who have lived much together, and have a great regard for each other, which makes itself felt with as much precision and mysterious evidence, as the existence of mesmeric power.

Tib had not been two hours at the Castle, before her attention roused itself, like a pointer that scents game. Tib's mind pointed. Tib's mind scented a secret. For Tib was prodigiously shrewd; and especially she had that sort of quickness peculiar to children, servants, and uneducated persons who live in towns; the quick watch, the reading of human faces, habitual to those who are occupied with no intellectual or abstract ideas; a sample of which Eleanor had experienced the day she had questioned Bridget Owen, and saw Sandy and the gardener observing her. It is the one talent which accompanies ignorance; and if rural boors seem to make an exceptional case, that is because your rural boor reads only in the plowed furrow, the meadow grass, and the clouds of the sky; and therefore he is a prognosticator of weather, but not a physiognomist. He is stupid in a witness-box. I was present at a case in which a man had been struck from behind a hedge. It was a question of malice, or inadvertence.

"Did the lad seem to know the man who struck him? did he look frightened?"

"Well, I don't know if he looked frightened; he leaned up agin' the stile, and seemed hurted."

The question may seem a strange one; but

your town resident *would* have known if the lad looked frightened; if he seemed to recognize a foe, or to start at an accident; if he looked as though he meant to return the blow, but was faint, and couldn't. In cases of suicide, a gentleman's friends come forward, and state their amazement at the event; they can not account for it; they put him under no restraint, for they observed nothing; but the gentleman's town servant will state his expectation for some time past of a catastrophe; he will state his grounds for such expectation; he observed this; he remarked that; he told Tom or Joe "at the time," that his master was very low; *he* saw all that more educated minds overlooked. And this, because it is the habit of his life to read faces.

It was the habit of Tib's life. She had practiced it ever since she was a little, sly, staring girl, till she was a keen curious woman. She read faces, and she read nothing else.

So Tib began gleaning evidence of something; she didn't know what; evidence of a mutual understanding between Eleanor and Mr. Lindsay of Quebec; and Tib gleaned so industriously, that she had quite a little sheaf before long; and she thrashed her sheaf and winnowed it, and weighed the grain; and she carried the grain to Lady Macfarren, and they sowed it; and it brought up a crop of opinions not at all favorable to young Lady Penrhyn.

And Tib's sheaf was composed of several facts of various degrees of importance, some of which I shall present to the reader.

In the first place, Tib remarked what I have already adverted to; namely, a degree of unconscious familiarity, an interest taken by each in all that the other said or did, totally incompatible with the usual result of a very brief acquaintance between two indifferent persons.

Secondly, lest this could by any possibility be construed into one of those sudden preferences, by which the most virtuous and prudently-conducted ladies, now and then astonish their friends, Tib observed that the attentions paid by Mr. Lindsay to the duchess not only excited no jealousy, but now and then elicited an amused half-smile from Eleanor; a half-smile which puzzled Tib, while it rendered her doubly eager in the solving of her doubts.

Thirdly, Lady Penrhyn's spirits rose to a degree which the recovery of her fortune did not account for to Tib, though it did to Lady Macfarren; who disputed the point with the astute Dagoness, and was inclined to think the whole condition of Eleanor's mind, her satisfaction in the company of the stranger, and her newly-acquired cheerfulness, were the natural result of a rise in the money market.

Lady Macfarren was a very Danaë at heart; (though I do not think Jove would have cared to test the fact); she knew that whatever her own sorrow or depression might be, she would have found consolation in three per cent. consols; and no man could earn golden opinions from her so easily, as he who brought news of the solid metal. But Tib was shrewd; and Tib felt sure that with Eleanor, all that glittered was not gold; that some other joy shone out of some Lagenian mine; and Tib wished from her heart that she could spring the mine upon young Lady Penrhyn.

Many little circumstances occurred that astonished Tib. Once she came into the greenhouse where Mr. Lindsay and Eleanor were standing, while Sandy was training a plant over the roof.

"Sandy, my man," said David Stuart, "you've got the stalks of that creeper too close; the plant will be cramped in the bloom."

"Aweel, they war closer in Indy," was Sandy's reply; and just as David was about to make some further remark, he perceived Tib and bowed in acknowledgment of the Dagonistic presence. Tib slightly returned his salute, and thought over the sentence he had spoken, and which she had heard with her Tibbish ears. It was strange, merely from the tone; the familiar, carelessly authoritative tone; it was not the way a common guest and a stranger would speak to a servant of the house.

On another occasion, David was reading out loud to the ladies while they sate working in the evening. He read very well, and the Duchess of Lanark had entreated him, in the prettiest way, to "make music after hers," by reading some of Shakspeare's sonnets. Tib felt rather inclined to yawn; Lady Macfarren read the newspaper to herself with supreme indifference, and then went to bed. The Duke of Lanark remained discussing some estate plans with Lord Peebles and Mr. Malcolm at the other end of the drawing-room.

David read one sonnet after another as they came, making comments with Eleanor and the duchess. Presently he read one in which his voice suddenly broke so completely, and told the ear so plainly that something in it affected the reader with an emotion vainly struggled against, that Tib swallowed a half-perpetrated yawn by pressing her hand against her mouth, and looked and listened eagerly. She heard David read these lines from Shakspeare:

> "Thy loving pity doth the impression fill,
> Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;
> For what care I who calls me good or ill,
> So thou o'ergreen my bud, my good allow;
> Thou art my All-the-World!"

David never looked up, or showed sign of consciousness as to which of his audience should sympathize in the passionate earnestness of the last words; but Eleanor, poor soul, looked across from her work for a moment at the countenance of the reader. Eleanor looked at him! Oh! did ever one brief look hold so much love, and pity, and desire to comfort? Tib saw it with her Tibbish eyes; hard, keen, and green—and she opened them wide at the sight.

Another evening, David, being asked to sing, sang a Neapolitan air which Tib recognized; and she said,

"Well, now, Mr. Lindsay, I'm just wondering where ye could have got that tune, for I never heard any one sing it saving and excepting Lady Margaret Fordyce, who brought it from Italy with her.

David was not embarrassed. He turned the leaves of the duchess's music-book carelessly over, and said,

"Well, I should have expected to find it here; songs travel all over the world; it is well known in America."

But Eleanor had again betrayed herself, by a look—a look of extreme anxiety and terror, directed alternately at Tib and the false merchant

of Quebec, and Tib was not to be *déroutée* in this way.

Once (and this was the crowning handful in Tib's sheaf, Mr. Malcolm, incited thereto by the Dagoness to whom he still bore a Tibbite loyalty, and whom he still considered "pairfect," or only elevated to the position she deserved, in being Countess of Peebles), began questioning David as to "what Lindsay he was, for it was surely a Scotch name, and nae doot the family of settlers must originally hae been Scotch." David replied boldly enough. He said, certainly he believed the race he belonged to, was a branch of the real Lindsays, but they had been in America for several generations, and the Lindsays would hardly perhaps think it complimentary his claiming to be one of them. He then walked to the book-case, and appeared to be studying the peerage.

"He's one of the Linsey Woolsey Lindsays, you see," said Lord Peebles, chuckling, to Eleanor; "one of the Linsey Woolsey Lindsays, eh! and they wouldn't think that the right sort of stuff, eh?"

Checked in this jocularity by Tib, who no longer welcomed the little Dagon's jokes as indulgently as when he made his celebrated allusion to the ghost of "Rob Roy," Lord Peebles asked Mr. Malcolm what price he thought Dunleath would fetch.

"Is Dunleath again for sale?" said Eleanor.

"I thought ye knew it was for sale," said Tib; "my mother just abominates the place, it's so very lonesome. She desires to dwell in Edinburgh now I'm married, and she wished Lord Peebles might have had it for a shooting-box; but he'll not be shooting much, I'm thinking, and I like the place no better than she does. It's just a very desert."

"Puir Mr. Stuart thought it just a vary Paradise," said Mr. Malcolm, with a sigh; "and I'm mickle o' his opinion."

"Weel he'd ha' got a sheriff's officer, with a flaming sword, to stand over his paradise if my father hadn't given him money-writs for it that took him out of Eden and away to Italy," said Tib, with a spiteful laugh.

"I can't think how he ever contrived to run through so much money," said Lord Peebles.

"Especially when he never paid any of the money he owed," said Tib with another laugh.

"Weel, he was a vary careless man, and he was greatly given to pictures and conveeviality and thae sort of devarsions," said Mr. Malcolm; "whiles he was fou, and whiles he was sober; but, for the maist part, o' late years especially (when his troubles just overcame and overshadowed him) he was fou, and a man maun keep his head clear and his blood cool, that wad get through difficulties. He was a vary careless man."

"Careless," said Tib, impatiently; "I'm really surprised that a man o' your sense should take up with such expressions, Mr. Malcolm! Careless! He was just a drunken auld cheat."

"Well, it was maybe no exactly a wiselike expression, Leddy Peebles," observed Mr. Malcolm, submissively, "but the man being ruined and dead—and his family dispairsed—and having received great kindness fra his leddy, when I *was a little lad, I just* feel a sort o' shrinking in *tongue to name him* hardly."

"Hush," said Tib, with something between a laugh and a snort, "drunkenness is drunkenness, and cheatery is cheatery, whether the laird's wife was kind to ye, or no. She held her head high enough at one time; and had to bend it low enough."

"She just bent it into the grave, Leddy Peebles; whar the lad hid it fra' hard words," said Mr. Malcolm, with something positively approaching to reproof and remonstrance in his tone; "and there's no ae body, high or low, that remembers that noble creature Mistress Stuart o' Dunleath." But here Mr. Malcolm was so frightened at the glare of Tib's astonished eyes, that he backed out of whatever he was going to say in favor of David's mother, into the cowardice of habitual concession. "It's no that, however," said he, "that sud blind a man to facts; and it's true as ye stated it, Leddy Peebles, with yere usual clear-sightedness into a' human affairs, that a man that's aye drunken maun be held to be a drunkard; and a man that's aye spending whan he should be paying, maun beware of folks ca'ing him what ye ca'd him but noo."

"What *I* ca'd him but noo," exclaimed Tib with a fierce imitation of her quondam suitor's faltering tone. "Pooh, man, what all the world calls him, that ever heard o' the man. My father knew his affairs well enough. These Stuarts are a disgrace to the name o' Stuart. The very matter ye've had to settle lately about Lady Penrhyn's fortune at my brother's office, might guide ye to that conclusion: I say Stuart o' Dunleath was a drunken old cheat, and it's clear his blood's in his son."

The Duke of Lanark had drawn near them; having caught some broken phrases of the conversation, which he feared was taking a turn painful to Eleanor. David Stuart had heard also; he turned at the last phrase—his lips parted to speak—a gentle hand, with a rapid motion, arrested the words, and seizing him by the arm a gentle voice whispered "command yourself." Tib saw the gesture, rapid as it was: she saw that words were uttered, but she could not hear what they were. And some one besides Tib saw this strange incident. The Duke of Lanark perceived Eleanor's hand touch Mr. Lindsay's wrist, and his frank face turned with surprised scrutiny to David. "We are all of us very hard upon faults we do not understand," said he, in Margaret's tone and manner, and he sat down by Eleanor.

Defend yourself David Stuart! Defend the memory of that kind, hospitable, reckless father; beloved to the last, with all his errors and imprudence, in his own home; among those who stood nearest to his faults, and suffered most from his follies!

Defend his memory, whom you believe (not without good grounds) to have suffered less from his own imprudence, great as it was, than from the skillful advantage taken of that imprudence, by the wily writer who had the management of his affairs; and the dishonest gains of the man who built his own fortune out of his employer's. Defend him, when that man's daughter dares to slur the victim on the authority of the victimizer! Defend the memory of the husband your noble-hearted mother loved with unswerving affection through ruin and discredit: holding with the poet:

"What colder thing can strangers do, unknit by ties of blood,
With every right to change their mien according to their mood;
What colder thing can strangers do, than leave us when they find
All is not perfect in the heart, or noble in the mind?
I pray Heaven bless the earnest love, which, like a constant river,
Where once it frays itself a course, will roll therein for ever;
Not doling measured kindness out, as if it were reward;
Not keeping tenderness encaged, with reason for its guard;
Not steering, under careful sail, a calculated course;
But humbly true to simple vows—'For better or for worse.'"

For the sake of her who so well understood the value and the force of those simple vows, defend your dead father, David Stuart!

Pale, fierce, embarrassed, Mr. Lindsay, of Quebec, faltered forth a few words.

"My friend Stuart," said he, "would be much surprised at the hard judgment passed upon the laird by Mr. Peter Christison's daughter, holding, as many did, the opinion, that had his father's affairs been in other hands, they might perhaps have righted."

"No doubt," said the Dagoness, reddening, "and his own too, if *they'd* been in other hands. Do ye know Mr. Stuart weel?" and in Tib's green eye came a glance of spite, like a line of light on a turbid wave.

"Well enough, Lady Peebles, to know that though no friend could defend him successfully, yet he does not deserve such bitter enmity from those who are unacquainted with him."

"Will ye no favor us with a tune on the hairp?" said Mr. Malcolm, in an alarmed voice, to the duchess, whose large, lovely eyes were riveted on Tib, with more anger than their habitual softness of expression seemed to render possible.

"Do, my dear," said the duke. "Let us have music and not discord. Let us hear that beautiful march, with a harp accompaniment. Lady Penrhyn will assist you, I am sure. Mr. Lindsay, will you play a game of chess?"

Having thus broken up the little circle, the duke moved toward the further end of the apartment. As they passed down the room, the duchess, lifting her re-softened eyes to Stuart's face, said, plaintively:

"I never saw such a disagreeable, spiteful woman as that, and about a gentleman she knew was your friend too, and Eleanor's friend; for though he behaved ill about Eleanor's fortune, *she* never said a hard word of him. I am sure, Mr. Lindsay, you will leave Scotland thinking us great barbarians."

And the duchess looked as little like a barbarian as a duchess in a pale silk dress, with a sylph-like figure, and long eyelashes, could possibly look. The duke said nothing more; he sate down silently to play the game at chess. I do not think either gentleman could have given any reason for the various moves they made, or knew precisely how it came to pass, that after a certain number of such moves, one succeeded in checkmating the other.

Nor do I think the composer of the music would have felt otherwise than bitterly disappointed, had he heard the slurred, uncertain execution of the piano accompaniment, under Eleanor's trembling fingers, and the somewhat capricious vigor of the harp chords, during a portion of the march, while the duchess was thinking angrily what a very odious old maid that silly Lord Peebles had married. Had it been the air known by the name of the "Trumpet Minuet"—an air once played during the march of Scottish criminals to the place of their execution—and had Tib been led along, weary and humble, her head drooping, her neck ready for the hangman's rope, I fear, gentle as the duchess really was at heart, she would not, in the first moments of her displeasure, have heard that dreary music with much regret.

But why do I conjure up such an image? Tib humbled! Tib with her head drooping! Nonsense! Tib was to be "Tib triumphans" to the end of time. Tib was to ride through the world always on the Hippogriff of her success, as proud (though fortunately for the bystanders, not so nude) as Danneker's statue of Ariadne.

CHAPTER XXXVI

It was Sunday. Sir Stephen Penrhyn was expected home on the following day. Eleanor and David Stuart lingered together. Their false position became more apparent as the return of the master of the house drew near; though there was neither love nor confidence between Eleanor and her husband—though there was no chance of his questioning or doubting the information he had received respecting the arrival of Mr. Lindsay of Quebec, who had it in charge to arrange divers matters in England and Scotland, for Mr. Stuart in America; for Mr. Weston who had sailed for India; and Mr. Nevil's family—though detection did not seem, and was not, one whit more probable after Sir Stephen arrived, than before. The secret weighed more heavily on Eleanor's heart. She must meet her husband, acting a lie; she must meet him, doing the honors of his house to a guest who was, in point of fact, an impostor. It was painful—intolerable. Eleanor did not see why David should not at once release her and himself from the bond of this fatal concealment, why he should not take the opportunity of her husband's return to say:

"I did not choose to await you, the object of an inimical curiosity among persons, all more or less aware of my past history; but the fact is, I myself am Mr. Stuart, and am here to offer in person all necessary explanations respecting the replacing of this money, and the unhappy speculations, which led to its involvement."

Oh! if he would do this, what a relief it would be to Eleanor. She watched his countenance as he sate wrapped in gloomy abstraction; thinking, not of his false name, or the bitter past, or the difficult present, but of one sole feature in to-morrow's events; that he should at length see Eleanor's husband, this husband of whom she would not talk, but whom she did not love, with whom she did not live happily. This master of her and her destiny, in whose hands he himself had left her, when he fled his post as guardian of her life's best interests. The desire to see Sir Stephen Penrhyn, had become quite a feverish sensation in David Stuart's heart.

As they sate silently together, the door of the drawing-room opened, and Lady Macfarren ap-

peared: bonneted, booted, and shawled: which feminine preparations somehow in her, never appeared feminine, but rather gave the idea of a "panoply of war," as though she had donned full armor and a complete suit of mail, and had come to defy you, *cap à pie*. Even the parasol, with which the fair sex are wont daintily to shelter their complexions, altered its purpose in the hands of this vigorous lady: and when closed, often served to "thwack" a rebellious dog, when open, was borne before her, like the bosky shield of one of Ossian's heroes: as though the sun, that great, honest, inactive foe, did not so much signify, and it was the view that had to be met front to front upon the untented field; the wind, that treacherous skirmisher, whose daring and gusty attacks often delineated with more precision than grace, the majestic proportions of Sir Stephen's sister, through the folds of fine spun tartan, which it was her good will and pleasure to wear without what is termed "the ridiculous encumbrance" of a *crinoline* petticoat. And I do not say she was wrong, I am all for the classic folds of the Caryatide drapery, *versus* the modern *crinoline*, if the fashion could be put to the vote and carried *nem. con.*, but the contrary being the usual practice, Lady Macfarren's dress had something singular and masculine in it, as though it were a compromise between female attire and those articles which are never mentioned in polite society, by their proper (or improper) name: articles which were worn by Lady Hester Stanhope, as part of her costume, but over which when she received visitors (as we are assured by Mr. Kinglake, in that most spirited and entertaining work "Eöthen"), even she was in the habit of dropping "several folds of muslin."

Lady Macfarren stood then in the doorway, and by her side stood Tib, also dressed for walking. No, not dressed, you can not use so common-place a term as dressed, for Tib; though you might for Lady Macfarren. Tib was, what poets call "arrayed," she was arrayed in the proper walking costume of a countess of the nineteenth century, as combined and contrived by Madame Centlivre Broché: a costume of which satin seemed the ground-work, and lace the superstructure. They stood in the doorway, and looked into the room with what Spenser says "a much misliking eye."

"Are you ready, Lady Penrhyn?" said the mailed sister-in-law, "or have you clean forgotten all about divine service this morning?" and she turned an indescribable glance on Stuart.

"I am not ready, I had no idea it was so late," said Eleanor, glancing at the clock on the chimney-piece.

"It's not particularly late," said Lady Macfarren, dryly; "though you don't seem to have much notion of the time. But as we have rather a long walk to take, I thought we'd better set out at once. Lady Peebles and I will walk on; the duchess has a headache, and does not mean to go at all: some folks have their headaches on very convenient days of the week."

"So we'll just walk on," said Tib, "and take Mr. Malcolm with us, and I've no doubt whatever, *but ye'll both do yere* vary best endeavors *to overtake us.*" And Tib's parting glance before she closed the door, and Tib's snorting laugh told of that fine irony by which language conveys a meaning precisely the reverse of our spoken words.

Eleanor colored and looked down, and there was a shade of nervousness in her manner when, after a short pause, she addressed her companion, speaking in that hurried, rapid, continuous tone, often adopted by persons who feel embarrassed.

"It is a long walk, and I had certainly forgotten that; for to-day Mr. Greig will not preach at Logie, but at Carrick. He preaches on alternate Sundays at Logie; and the other days we go to the hill, or to a large barn belonging to one of the principal tenants, for there's no church built yet at Carrick. Sir Stephen was applied to by Lord Glensittart and Campbell, of Broomielaw, to assist in building one, and I believe the Duke of Lanark has already subscribed, but they all thought Government ought to do something toward it, as Carrick is quite as populous as Logie, and there was a dispute about this; meanwhile we are without a church at all."

Eleanor paused at last, but David Stuart made no observation; he was leaning with his elbow on the mantle-piece, looking at the great fire, which was getting dull, and full of white smothering ashes.

A basket of fir chips stood on one side of the hearth, and Eleanor knelt down and put one or two into the smouldering embers. The bright crackling blaze startled her companion from his reverie. "How thoughtful you are!" said she, as she looked timidly up in his face.

David Stuart smiled: one of the old, care-worn smiles that had so often haunted her memory. He turned from her, and walked to the window. "You have made the room too warm," said he, "look what a glorious autumn sunshine there is. Put on your bonnet, and let us follow those two meek saints on their Sabbath pilgrimage."

Eleanor left the room to prepare for her walk, and to wonder how she could avert the sort of sneering condemnation which was evident in the manner both of Lady Macfarren and Tib. They obviously suspected something; what did they think? what did they suspect? Eleanor sighed under the burden of her secret: but ah! how her heart would have swelled with indignation, could she have known the real conjecture of the excellent ladies. How she would have shuddered with fear and amazement, could she have guessed that they had made up their minds (*both* their minds—for they had openly consulted and spoken of it together) that Mr. Lindsay was Eleanor's lover! Her lover; not in the vague English sense of the word, as a wooer and admirer—but to the full extent of the Parisian translation, which draws so fine a moral line between the *amoureux* and the *amant*.

Tib's keen reasonings about young Lady Penrhyn's indifference to cash, which had at first seemed but 'dubitable' to the Highland Danaë, gradually acquired force from the strength of corroborative evidence. Lady Macfarren became convinced that the recovery of Eleanor's fortune, was *not* the source of her young sister-in-law's satisfaction: and with a rapidity far beyond Tib's, who was still "putting this and

that together," to produce a case sufficiently complete, she at once took up with the conclusion that a successful love intrigue had absorbed, and brought her back to cheerfulness. That she had known Lindsay formerly, they could not doubt; when, how, under what circumstances, they had not precisely decided, and were still endeavoring to decide; but that his presence at Castle Penrhyn was an outrage on the insulted honor of its absent master, was as clear as day.

Lady Macfarren had private experiences of her own, which strengthened her in these conjectures. Her early married life had not been without adventures. She had passed, what to borrow again from our continental neighbors, is indulgently termed a *jeunesse orageuse*. Could the light whispers of the silver larches, which bowed over the lake at Glencarrick, have acquired as audible a voice as the reeds in the reign of King Midas, many stories might have been repeated, which, fortunately for Lady Macfarren, remained unknown. Even Dunleath—desecrated Dunleath—might have told something of Mr. Peter Christison, which his good, busy wife never knew; and how, as the latest wooer of Danaë's autumn, he gave and received at the most favorable rate of exchange, tokens of affection, whose sum total was never publicly balanced. How he advised and superintended the drawing up of old Penrhyn's will, by which Danaë ousted her brother (then but a lad) in his expected inheritance of Glencarrick; and how for years, with co-relative sympathies, the writer and the lady mingled calculations in plain figures, with declarations in equivocal words, making Love wait upon Mammon, with a humility due to Love's inferior position; and Mammon foster Love, as a sort of tenant-at-will, paying a heavy rental. From all which experience, Lady Macfarren derived that facile belief in the fallibilty of other women, which is as sure a test of having erred, as any other evidence that can be given. An observation I make with reluctance, since it is certain that facility of belief is generally with the great majority, and that incredulity is the virtuous exception, which would seem to prove what the majority would be extremely sorry to think was capable of any proof whatever. Having this opinion of every body's fallibility—of Eleanor's fallibility in particular—Lady Macfarren resolved to impart to her brother on his arrival, all she knew, thought, advised, and suspected, respecting his wife. She sharpened her tongue to speak daggers, till it was as pointed and nimble as a snake's; she sate stiff and upright in her chair, considering how in the best (or bitterest) manner to prove to him that he had been deceived from first to last. Her soul

"Was up in arms, and eager for the fray."

And as to Tib, what between gleams of discovery, and flashes of spite, her eyes emitted as rapid a succession of sparks as a cat's back in a state of electricity. Sir Stephen's arrival was never expected with so much eagerness in the memory of the oldest inhabitants of his home.

Eleanor returned slowly and sadly to the drawing-room, conning over the arguments she thought she would venture to use, to persuade David to avow his real name on the occasion of her husband's coming.

"How long you have been!" said he, as they stepped out into the sunshine, "I almost expected to see you in a costume like that of Tabitha, Countess of Peebles; I am quite relieved to find that you have been this tedious half hour tying the strings of your straw-bonnet.

"You are provoked with Lady Peebles," said Eleanor; "but indeed one can not wonder. I think she is the most spiteful person I ever knew," and Eleanor sighed. Why did they hate her? Why were they spiteful to her? she would have been so glad to love them all, so thankful to have had friends, before David Stuart came.

Her observation required no answer, and none was made. They walked on in silence by the gurgling burn, and through the wood of wicker trees, whose light branches lifting in the breeze, sent glimpses of sunlight on to moss and heath below.

"We are in good time, late as we set out," said Eleanor, pausing as they reached a more open space, where the path was crossed by the bed of a mountain stream, now partially dried up. "There is a fall here in winter, but not in summer; the people make a short-cut through it from the road, and the wheels of Mr. Greig's light car have not been over the sand. We have not more than ten minutes walk to go; the moment we have climbed that bank, we shall be among them all."

"Then for heaven's sake let us sit down under the shade of these birch trees till Mr. Greig arrives. Why should we join them sooner than is necessary. You will be the better for resting; and here there is such a long view. Look how clear every object stands out against the sky. What a heavenly day! Now, if you have good eyes, you can distinguish Dunleath there, that white speck far away! Do you see it?"

Yes, she saw it. They both gazed in silence on the view before them. Eleanor absently pulled a few sprigs of white heather and harebell, which grew within reach of her hand. Presently she turned to her companion.

"Is it not possible to end all this pain by meeting Sir Stephen at once as Mr. Stuart?"

"It is not possible. I could not endure it. Nor would it be worth while; for at all events I must go away soon after I see him."

"Why must you go?"

"I only crossed the Atlantic to see you once more with the weight off my heart, which had crushed me for so many years. You know, Eleanor, I told you the day of my arrival, that the day of my departure must follow it close. My home is not here. God knows where it is!"

With a sudden gush of tenderness Eleanor laid her hand on his.

"Oh, do you not see," said she "how much happier life would be, if you could get over the false shame of your name? (for I can not think it true shame). Is restitution nothing? Are those eight years of suffering and penury nothing? Trust others to feel a little as I do about you There is so much kindness in the world, in spite of exceptions like Tib and Lady Macfarren. We might see each other here at Lanark's Lodge, in London, so much, so often, you might be my dear friend and guardian still, instead of becoming once more a dream to me! Do think of it. I quite dread my husband's arrival. It is the first secret I have ever had to keep in my life, and it

weighs me to the earth with dismay and depression."

"Not the first, Eleanor; there is one secret you have kept well—even from me."

"From you! Oh, never!" and she lifted her frank, soft eyes to his face, as if to let him read how little of mystery and deception lay in their clear depths. As she did so, David Stuart caught her hands.

"Then tell it me now, Eleanor," said he, with a sorrowful smile; "that secret you were about to whisper in my ear that dreadful day? Who won your girlish heart? On whom was all that soul and feeling wasted? Did you regret him? Did he pine—oh, how he must have pined for you? Who did you love, Eleanor, or who did you think you loved?" With a convulsive start Eleanor shrunk from his gaze; his rapid questionings; the grasp of his trembling hands; but she shrank in vain. He looked at her at first with wonder, perplexity, and eager scrutiny, as though he would read her very soul. Then suddenly his hold relaxed; a suppressed exclamation burst from his lips; a joy so wild and terrible shone out of his eyes, that Eleanor's heart quailed within her. He dropped her hand, and sprang to his feet. He looked down on her, crouched like a frightened hind. With a piteous, imploring glance, she looked up at him and tried to speak; tried—but failed.

"Oh! Eleanor," said he, passionately, "what is it you fear? For the love of Heaven and all the angels, don't look as if you feared me!"

"You look so glad! You look so glad!" said she with anguish.

"Glad—yes! of course glad!" he spoke in a wild, bewildered way. "I can not choose but be glad; do not be afraid of my gladness; me—me—you loved me—oh! blind idiot that I was! oh, life that lies in a wreck round me! Oh, Eleanor! gentle, noble, pure-hearted child! Oh! God, that saw fit so to deal my punishment! my just punishment."

And as he spoke the last words, he hid his face in his shuddering hands and wept. Eleanor gazed up at him, her very soul shaken with an agony of pity; but not daring to touch him; not able to speak. He made an effort over himself: his self-possession returned in a degree. He knelt down on one knee, on the bank; clinging by one of the low branches of the tree she leaned against, and bending gently toward her.

"Do not tremble, Eleanor, do not fear—what is there to fear? the earth heard it, and the sky, and our two selves—where is the danger? Not in my heart, not in my heart, that must cease to beat sooner than offend you. Oh! Eleanor, God bless you, whatever may follow this day to blot it out! Hark!"

There was a pause; the light wheels of a car were heard, approaching through the little wood.

"Calm yourself, dear child;" said David, in an anxious tone; and as he spoke he untied the strings of her bonnet, and dipping her handkerchief in the brook, bathed her temples. "Calm yourself," repeated he; "why should this annoy or distress you? Think of it as though you had told it me *then;* as though I had always known it. It shall make no difference between us. You *will trust me,* will you not, Eleanor?" and as a *quivering smile passed* over her pale face, he added: "you may trust me, Eleanor; you may indeed."

She thought so. He thought so, too. But very different from any trust. or good opinion of any sort, was the result of the contemptuous stare bestowed on Eleanor, by the mailed sister-in-law and her friend. They exchanged glances, as she took her place among the group assembled for worship. Pale—shaken—confounded, her thoughts running away from God and heaven, to the past, to the days of her childhood, the days of her youth. Roaming back to a frightened comparison of her own state of mind, with that of Margaret, in Faust, when the demon will not suffer her to pray in peace. Unable, like Margaret, to pray; unable to hear the words of the preacher. Seeing round her the groups of Highlanders, and Sir Stephen's tenantry, and groups of women, neat and tranquil, and reverential. Seeing the farmer Macpherson, whose house had been the last spot visited on earth by her little Clephane and Frederick; unable to suppress a moan—unable to suppress the evidence of feeling ill; pitied by Macpherson; pitied by the gude wife that sat next her; but not pitied by Tib. Watched by Tib—not pitied. Nor by Lady Macfarren; under the fierce glare of whose eyes Eleanor felt to sink as she had never sunk before. Fiercely watched, and fiercely condemned by both; while the prayer and hymn from that hill-side congregation went up in the soft sunshine, to the Heaven that "bends over all," and judges all—but not as man judgeth.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Eleanor's husband arrived; and David saw him—saw that coarse, handsome athlete, who received him with great good-humor, a sort of swaggering triumph; jesting him about being the messenger sent to put back stolen goods in their place, when the police could do nothing: talking clearly enough of business, and scornfully of all the parties concerned; and asking a number of questions which, though unimportant in themselves, cost David more embarrassment than he had yet had to endure. The very first evening they passed together at dinner, one of these circumstances which are half-provoking, half-ludicrous, rose out of the position in which David Stuart had placed himself by the assumption of a false name.

"Take a glass of claret, duke; Mr. Lindsay, will you have claret?" said Sir Stephen, as he filled his own glass to the brim; "Eleanor, how well you are looking; I don't know when I've seen you looking so well—you've quite got a color. Talking of looks, I've a letter from old Weston, Mr. Lindsay, which I'll show you tomorrow, a foolish sort of letter, going through all sort of explanations that have nothing to do with the matter in hand, only to show that his dead partner hadn't wittingly cheated any one. As if I cared a curse whether Nevil was a rogue or not. Never saw the fellow, never knew any thing about him; might have been hung at the Old Bailey for aught I care. Shows, however, how you mercantile men get into these scrapes—lucky when you get out of them without

shooting yourselves, eh, Mr. Lindsay? Stuart seems to have thought twice about that; second thoughts are best; a little flinching when it came to the point, eh? Did he ever describe it to you? I've seen fellows that would blow their brains out, as coolly as pop at a partridge, but it's not common. By Jove, a fellow must feel devilish strange with the mouth of a pistol at his own. But I forgot what I was going to ask you—oh, yes. What sort of a looking fellow is Stuart? Old Weston gives rather an interesting account of meeting him in the log-hut, in his long-winded letter (gad! that a fellow should take the trouble to write all that stuff to a man he don't know, to whitewash an old fool that has been in his grave these seven years and more. He says he was struck all of a heap, seeing Stuart in the forest in a leather cloak and moccasins, and recognized him at once—the handsomest man ever he saw in his life. Is he a fine-looking fellow? He must have had a good deal of pith in him, to stand that life in the back woods. I often think of taking a turn at it myself, and going over for a couple of months and hunt the moose. Capital sport, eh? Is he a fine-looking fellow, this dead-man-alive-again?" And Sir Stephen tossed off his claret and paused for a reply.

David Stuart answered evasively, "Stuart was well enough, but what we call fine men in this country, are not particularly suited to the life of the woods. The Indians themselves are rarely what we should consider fine men." He continued making some observations on the life of privation some of these men lead on long journeys, and while out in the hunting-grounds. At first Sir Stephen's attention was distracted from the subject; he was watching his wife, who had flushed painfully at the cross-questioning to which David had been subjected on his own appearance. Sir Stephen thought he had never seen her look so beautiful. She reminded him of days when he used to see her at balls, when she was a girl in London. Some of the old feelings of admiration returned, when he was "in love" with Eleanor; he repeated to her how well he thought she was looking, and then, as she led the ladies to the drawing-room, he turned again to David, and soon became vehemently interested in the accounts of "the wild sports of the west," and pronounced Mr. Lindsay to be "a deuced pleasant fellow, and uncommonly gentlemanlike."

The Duchess of Lanark, on her part, could not forbear remarking to Eleanor, as they were sipping their coffee:

"I do not know what Mr. Stuart may be like, but *I* think Mr. Lindsay is the handsomest man I ever saw. Now you can tell us, Eleanor—was your guardian as handsome as Mr. Lindsay?"

"Oh, yes—that is—he was younger, you know," said Eleanor, confusedly, the color again rising in her cheek.

"No—I don't know any thing about him," said the duchess, rather pettishly, "and I've never liked to ask you about him while we thought he was dead, though I've often wished—I was afraid of hurting your feelings, the story was so shocking. But I've heard Margaret say he was handsome, and like Mrs. Stuart. Now describe him to us?"

"It is so difficult to describe a person," faltered Eleanor.

"Was he at all resembling Mr. Lindsay, Leddy Penryhn?" said Tib.

Coleridge's lines in "Christabel," flashed into Eleanor's memory:

> "A serpent's eye blinks small and sly,
> And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head."

Her heart rose to defy Tib and her questionings.

"No—not the least like Mr. Lindsay," answered she, with reckless decision.

Oh, Eleanor! oh, loathsome life of little lies! distilling like poison drops on every thing under the shadow of that great upas tree, the first false pretense! and they seemed more painful from the very mood in which Sir Stephen had returned. He was so extremely cheerful, so well satisfied with the news of the restitution of this great sum of money; so willing to be companionable with his stranger guest, so more than usually attentive to Eleanor, that a very whirlpool of miserable thoughts seemed to gather round her.

Yes, Sir Stephen was attentive to Eleanor. She was looking so well, so different from what she had looked for many a long day, that her beauty had almost the advantage of novelty to him. No one would have guessed, who saw his return to his home, that Eleanor was unbeloved. David Stuart pondered over it that night, as he paced his chamber, restless and sleepless; pondered over it as he stood and saw the pale morning-star melt into the hues of sunrise, and heard the confused chirping of a thousand birds change to the clear, distinct song by which every matin warbler raised its separate hymn to the Creator, to Him "who made the lesser light to rule the night, and the greater light to rule the day."

Night and day were alike to David Stuart. Rest was gone; a sort of strange delirium seemed to seize upon him. He thought of his approaching departure: he thought of Eleanor and her home; he shuddered with a fierce, mad jealousy, when he reflected that the last time this man—this husband—had held any communication with him, it was to petition *his* consent, as Eleanor's guardian, to the marriage which had taken place. That he had written humbly to explain, to submit the prospects and hopes of his rich, prosperous future, to David, as arbiter of the one great hope that was to perfect his destiny. They met on a different level now.

And Eleanor? She was not happy; she had admitted so much; but she had not admitted that she did not love her husband. Did she love him? There were many sorts of unhappiness. She might love him and be jealous. The Duchess of Lanark was very coquettish; she might be jealous of her. He might be inconstant—inconstant to Eleanor! It was David himself she had loved in girlhood; he had learned that yesterday; but what was a girl's love? what strength could it have had against a dream of death and wrong?—what strength to outlive him—and time—and change—and the wooing of another love, to fill up the blank of horror his loss and his supposed suicide must have made? Eight years she had been Sir Stephen's wife. Even if unbeloved at first, could this man, in eight years, not love the wife of his bosom to the forgetting of sorrow, and the valuing of his love?

Eleanor had been a mother; the blessed bond of children had been theirs; she had adored those little ones; their memory was her first thought on seeing again the guardian of her own childhood. He remembered her look, as she lay weeping on his bosom in the hour of their meeting. He remembered the sound of her voice, and the words, "Oh! I had two such sweet children! But I lost them both; they were both drowned!" Even if unbeloved at first, must she not have grown to love the father of her children?—he who had rejoiced with her over their birth, and wept with her over their graves? She, so tender; she, so good; she, so made for home affections and rooted hopes, and not for the restless, frivolous world; was it likely, was it credible, that her home should remain a blank to her?

He thought of her dumb confession yesterday—that confession she had tried to make eight years ago—eight years ago, when he himself was what she loved. He saw, as in a vision, the Eleanor of those days—Eleanor Raymond—young, slight, girlish, lovely, pointing to the volume of Shakspeare, in which the lines she quoted were to be found, repeating, with smiling, quivering lips, the reason why the marriage proposed to her could not be. Olivia's reason: "I can not love him!" Did she love him now? She must love him. He was the sort of man to hit a woman's fancy; they loved courage and manliness. How Emma had loved that stern, disagreeable sailor! There was no reason Sir Stephen should be less loved than Godfrey. He was a handsomer man by far. What a noble, statue-like figure! Something coarse and ruffianly, too; but that did not always bar a woman's love. You can not reason upon preference. She loved him, and was jealous of him. It must be so! Her manner the day before—her manner proved that, whatever the dream of her girlhood might have been, it was gone.

When the startling fact burst in light upon David's soul, that he had himself been the object of her preference; when, after years of suffering, the joy of this knowledge flashed from his eyes, how did she receive the evidence of that joy? She shrunk from him, as though she would have hid herself in the earth! Shame—terror!—terror intense and overwhelming—terror that spoke in every feature, took possession of her soul! Revolt—repugnance, for aught he knew. When he stood weeping before her (for he remembered that he had wept), she stirred not—spoke not. His very movement to approach her when he knelt by her side—though he had not ventured to touch her—caused her to shrink anew. She feared him; feared, she knew not what; feared, probably, by some vague instinct, lest the admission of a love that was long past, should be held to be a claim for love existent. Oh! if but one grain of that girlish love had lingered in her heart, she could not so have refrained from all expression of sympathy! She could not have resisted the impulse, even if repented of afterward with tears and burning blushes, of flinging herself for one wild moment into his arms; of saying to him: "It was you that I loved—then—now—always; but never let us speak of it again!" This she did not do. Another love guarded her heart from all but a common pity; from all but a common friendship. She had embraced him readily on his return from America, clinging to him with tears and sobs; but that was not love: that was joy and grief, mingling in such wild storm as sends the waves of feeling sweeping over the shore that is a boundary on common days. She would never embrace him—never cling to him again! Of that he had an instinctive consciousness. Yesterday had brought them too near not to divide them forever. She had shrunk from him: he remembered it all now. It had not struck him so much till he reflected upon it in the silence of this wakeful night. She had shrunk from him. Let her shrink! Soon the distance of the Atlantic should divide them! Soon her home, and her happiness, and her husband—her jealousy of that man's love—her repugnance for the love she had once experienced, should be memories, not present realities, to David's heart.

He reasoned as men reason. As the blind dream of colors, so they argue of woman's heart. Under the roof that sheltered him, the heart he maligned made its own dumb struggle with pain, and innocent, even in its self-reproach, took refuge from pain in prayer. It yearned to him with pity and affection. It bowed unmurmuringly under the burden of his present concealment, the acted character, the assumed name; and meekly it buried the shame of the discovery of her own past secret; that secret which was now, alas! revealed to David, though she knew he had never returned the love she gave; and that in those days she had mistaken the cause of his agitation. He had seemed glad. Oh! his look of joy was terrible! but he seemed to respect her still. She could only hope he would not think the worse of her; that he would remember her with indulgence and approval when he should be gone, and she be left alone in the little circle of foes, in that house where no one cared for her; that house by whose gray, stern, stately gate, stood Bridget Owen's decorated lodge.

He rose, the blood at heart, when he heard the house stirring, from the couch, where he had only thrown himself at sunrise: rose, full of a wrathful grief, and went out by the road they two had walked the day before. The early sun gave brightness without much warmth, like the dawn of a love not yet strengthened to passion; the fresh morning wind played fitfully with the quivering leaves of the birch; the clear dew glittered on heather, and moss; the burn ran gurgling over and round its ancient playfellows, the stones, making a very melody of coolness. But those who have known the burning and choking that fevered David's breast, know that at such times vain is all the melody and freshness of nature: vain the struggle to breathe—the effort to be calm. The delight of coolness, and the fanning of pleasant winds, are away in some other world, beyond the sphere of our being.

He came to the spot where they had rested; the silent bank where her sweet voice had spoken; the tree where she had leaned her head. He looked on all with his sleepless, wearied eyes, and then with a great and bitter cry, he clasped his arms round the senseless larch, and wept for the blessing lost forever!

As he wept, he became aware of the presence of Lady Macfarren, who, with two large deer-

hounds, and an umbrella, leveled like a catapult, stood eying him with derision and amazement.

"What devilry are ye at, Mr. Lindsay, that ye set up such a howling in the wilderness? I'm thinking you'll not be able to pick up broken eggs, if ye were to cry from Michaelmas to Martinmas; and indeed crying, if it is to be done, had better fall to the share of Leddy Penrhyn. I don't know how ye manage at Quebec, but this is the first I ever heard of a man sitting down to sob like one of the softer sex."

And this specimen of the softer sex, giving a new swing-level to the catapult umbrella, and a short whistle to the dogs, strode off in the direction of the Castle, where, in the course of the morning, she delivered in a series of set phrases the result of her observations on Lady Penrhyn's conduct, not forgetting the extraordinary scene she had just witnessed, on the part of the lamenting guest.

Sir Stephen listened to her with excessive irritation, but with some incredulity. He knew her habitual judgment of her own sex to be any thing but indulgent; and he had an instinctive, involuntary conviction of Eleanor's purity. Just now he felt a *rechauffé* of admiration of his wife, and he was not disposed to quarrel with her at his sister's bidding. Neither would it suit him to quarrel, without real cause, with Mr. Lindsay. He had many matters to arrange with him, and he loved money quite as much as Lady Macfarren, though not so exclusively.

As to Eleanor being kind and familiar, and all that, she always had that sort of sentimental missishness about any thing connected with old days. He had seen her with a stupid, weather-beaten, old captain, that had made the voyage with her father and mother, when they first went out to India, just married, and full of hopeful anticipation. She treated that stupid, old sea-dog just like a born brother. So she did by a lank, gawky, red-nosed Scotchwoman, whom she insisted on driving about with, and having to dine constantly in London, only because the woman had been with Mrs. Stuart of Dunleath when she was dying, and sate up with her, and all that. Eleanor was silly and fanciful about those sort of things, and could not be judged by what she did in that way. She was always cram-full of sentimentality about her speculating guardian, and he'd no doubt that fellow Lindsay (who seemed a sharp fellow enough) had seen that, and made the most of it; and was glad enough to stay at the Castle in pleasant company, talking a devilish deal of nonsense about a man who seemed still likely to live to be hanged, as it turned out that he was not drowned after all.

With which light and playful allusion, Sir Stephen concluded all he chose to say to his sister. But he felt angry. He resolved to watch, even though he did not believe, and it destroyed his good-humor. He was not the sort of man to express his feelings by a familiar classic quotation, but he felt that "Cæsar's wife ought to be unsuspected;" and he was provoked with Eleanor for being thought to have a lover, even by his sister and Tib, and though she might not deserve the suspicion.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PURCHASE OF DUNLEATH.

Rendered shy by the scene that had taken place, the day they had attended the hill-gathering, Eleanor's manner was less cordial and tender to David than before. It altered, though not on the grounds he had believed. With a proud grief he met the alteration by a corresponding change on his own part. She should not shrink from him again; she need not fear his alluding in any way—no not by a kindly look, or regretful sigh—to the past. And shrewd Tib (for once at fault), perceiving this change, and noticing it to Danaë, they both agreed that it was a vile attempt at discretion on the part of the guilty pair, since the arrival of Sir Stephen at the Castle, and one proof more, if proof were needed, of their turpitude and infamous hypocrisy.

Meanwhile, not knowing the wider currents by which this Scylla and Charybdis hoped to wreck her, and full of her own anxieties and projects, Eleanor ventured one day into the room which was called the reading-room, and where books and papers lay scattered about, but where she generally found Sir Stephen inspecting his guns, or selecting flies for trout fishing.

"May I speak to you, or are you busy?" said Eleanor to her husband, as she came gently forward, and stood behind his chair where he sate, occupied with this piscatorial inspection.

"I'm not busy; at least I can hear you well enough while I'm looking through this book of flies—say your say. Don't stand behind me, stand round here by my side. How devilish well you look in that dress. What is it, pink, isn't it?" and Sir Stephen put his arm round his wife's waist.

"Lilac."

"Ah! lilac: well, you should always dress in lilac. What have you got to say?"

Esther never stood in the presence of Ahasuerus with greater trepidation, than Eleanor this day before Sir Stephen, for she came to speak about money, about her fortune, about the haunting dream of her girlhood. She wanted to purchase Dunleath. She explained, but Sir Stephen seemed quite at a loss to comprehend her.

"You want me to buy Dunleath? Nonsense! Why?"

"I do not want you to buy it, I wish to buy it myself; but I do not know how it is to be done."

"Gad! nor any one else. What do you mean? what do you want? D—n it, can't you speak out?"

"I wish to buy it with my own fortune—with the money my father left me."

"Now who the devil has been putting this into your head?" said Sir Stephen, with sudden fierceness, releasing Eleanor's waist, and pushing his chair back as if to face and confront her.

"No one. I have always wished it. I thought of it long before I was married: before I grew up. I meant to have asked my guardian."

"Well, then, you'd better have asked him first (though he don't seem to have had very clear ideas of who property belonged to), how a married woman could purchase any thing, seeing that what's hers is her husband's. How

the devil are you to buy Dunleath, when you haven't a farthing in the world?"

"But now—now that I have my fortune again," persisted Eleanor.

"G—d d—n it, how stupid women are in all matters of business. Your fortune's mine; do you understand that?"

"The fortune my father left me."

"The fortune your father left you? No married woman has a fortune of her own, as you call it, that isn't specially settled upon her. There's no such settlement in your case, the money has fallen in and been replaced, that's all. I'm your husband, and it's mine."

"I do not understand."

"Oh! d—n it! confound it, I'm not going to spend the whole morning talking business with you. Every thing that's yours is mine. The clothes you have on, the chain round your neck, the rings on your fingers are mine. The law don't admit a married woman has a right to a farthing's worth of property. It can't be done. If you were robbed to-morrow, and chose to take it into court, the thief might be acquitted unless the loss were laid in my name; a man was acquitted in that way; because a married woman can't have money of her own, it's her husband's money."

"Is it possible," said Eleanor, "that you will not suffer me to employ my money in that way, even if the formal law gives it to you?"

"G—d d—n your soul, take care what you're at!" said Sir Stephen, fiercely. "If I believed one quarter of what Janet would have me believe, I should be at no loss as to who was your adviser. I don't know what interest Mr. Lindsay may have in counseling you, but I warn him not to meddle—for if he does—by God—"

"Sir Stephen, I beg you to hear me, and to believe me; no one has advised me to this step. I wished to buy Dunleath when I was quite a child. I intended it as soon as I should be of age. Mr. Stuart was not aware of my wish then; and I have taken counsel of no one—of Mr. Lindsay, or any one else, now."

"Why buy Dunleath—why?" and Sir Stephen's irritation seemed to increase instead of diminish."

"When I was very young I had a notion—a romantic notion, if you please to think so—of buying it, and making a gift of it to my guardian. Now, I wish to buy it, to prevent its passing again into the hands of strangers. I thought, as it was so near our own place, that the land might be of value to you as an addition to Castle Penrhyn, and I thought—"

"Perhaps you want it for a dower house?" said Sir Stephen, with a fierce sneer; "perhaps you thought of setting up as Lady of Dunleath on your own account? Now, listen to me. Your cursed sentimentalities about this guardian of yours, Stuart of Dunleath, or Stuart of Botany Bay—your extraordinary welcome of the friend he's chosen to send over here (no doubt to pave the way, and sound whether he has any chance of being able to show his own face in the country by-and-by), your sighings, and talkings, and ridings, and walkings, with a fellow you only made acquaintance with five weeks ago, only because he's a sort of mes*senger from* the man who did you out of your *fortune when he wanted* to use it, and give it again as a favor; all this is cursed odd and improper. It has quite upset Janet; she don't know what to think about you; nor Lady Peebles either—not that I care a d—n what Lady Peebles thinks. They're both of them convinced that you're on terms of familiarity with that fellow, Lindsay, such as no married woman ought to be on with any man. It's well for you I don't think so, or, by G—d, I'd cut the fellow's throat like a deer's. But as to my encouraging all this whining, or buying David Stuart's d—d place, or any other place that he's had any thing to do with, I won't. Curse me if I wouldn't sooner be without an acre of ground in Scotland: curse me if I wouldn't rather you were lying in five foot of ground in the church-yard of Carrick, than signing the title deeds of Dunleath for either of us. And so now you have it—and there's my last word: the money's mine, and you're mine, and 'ware the man who meddles between us!"

'Ware, indeed! for any one who saw the fury of that violent brow, and heard the strenuous hand, as it fell with a clenched stroke on the table from which he rose, grinding his teeth over the last sentence. 'Ware all risks from which brute force could guard Sir Stephen and his best interests.

Eleanor's low voice rose on the pause of his silence. She had long ceased to shudder and turn faint at the oaths and exclamations with which her husband habitually interlarded his discourse. She had heard them constantly repeated for eight years. But she had never before heard the most distant allusion to the possibility of misconduct on her part. The crimson blush that flushed her cheek, at this sudden explanation of what Tib and the mailed sister-in-law had intended to insinuate, the day she had forgotten that Mr. Greig preached at Carrick, deepened and fixed there like a brand of shame. It was a new sensation to Eleanor, she had often been miserable, but never ashamed. To the haunting consciousness that David Stuart now knew the secret of her unwooed and unrequited love in girlhood, which already oppressed her, was superadded this blunt intimation of what others supposed possible of forwardness and sin, at the present hour. She felt bewildered and shocked. Her mind seemed suddenly to make acquaintance with degradation; and its horrors opened before her dim, distant, and lurid, like the yawning mouth of a demon cave. Her heart beat quick; she felt agitated and humbled; all the more humbled that she knew Sir Stephen was deceived, in some measure, since Lindsay was not what he pretended to be. She lifted her wistful, pleading eyes to her husband's face, for she felt that he had something to forgive; she spoke in a low, tremulous tone.

"Mr. Lindsay is going away in a few days," said she. "Going back to America, and I shall not see him again. Whatever familiarity or friendship my manner has betrayed has been the result of—of recollections of other days. Do not let your sister misjudge me. I do not deserve it. Do not let them talk me over in that way to you."

Sir Stephen's wrath subsided. His eyes rested on her while she spoke, and he was mollified, not by her submission—not by her instant relinquishment of the subject of petition, though he

felt relieved at that, for he had feared an argument as to her pecuniary rights, or at least reproaches; not even by her appeal to his protection, conveyed in the last sentence, though it sounded strangely and pleasantly in his ear; but by her beauty—by the hot blush that still burned in her cheek, mounting to her temples, and throwing its soft, pink shadow under the plaited coils of her hair; by the shy, appealing eyes, hidden again under their quivering lashes, after the first wistful glance in his face; by the agitation that trembled in her frame, as she faltered out her words. Some men might have thought her confusion a sign of guilt, but he did not. He knew Eleanor; he thought he knew her. He trusted her, partly from an instinct in her purity, and partly from a belief in her coldness. He thought her at once better than the majority of women, and less likely to be tempted or tried. Like many men who fail to inspire a return of the passion of love, he adjudged his failure to a defect in her nature of all power of attachment. He looked at her without distrust, and with vehement admiration.

"As to Lindsay," said he at length, "d—n the fellow—never mind him. He's going, as you say, and good luck go with him; and as to Janet, what does it matter what she says, or that old cat either? an old maid married to an old fool, not likely to have much besides scandal to occupy her. Give me a kiss, Eleanor, and let's say no more about it. I'm glad you did not go on arguing about buying that d—d place. Oh! Eleanor, you're handsomer than any woman I ever saw, if you weren't such a carved image."

A chill revulsion of feeling thrilled the heart he held so near his own. Eleanor remembered the day at the Lodge, and her husband's interview with Bridget Owen. The pity and the passion of the young Welshwoman; her beauty and her boldness; the speech in which Sir Stephen wished he had never married—never been father to Frederick and Clephane; the tempestuous grief, the fervent sympathy, the wild-answered embrace, all crowded on her memory. It was thus that her husband desired to be loved; there was her rival, with whom, in his secret heart, he was even now comparing her. There was the love she had not to give—the love, whose balanced contrary is repugnance and revolt. The kiss imprinted on his wife's cheek by Sir Stephen seemed to freeze it back to paleness, and he put her from his arms with a discontented sigh.

She lingered for a moment before she left him. The thought occurred to her that at least, after Stuart's departure, he would leave her at liberty to inform her husband of his real name, and his reasons for determining to conceal it, before they had well measured the rashness of the step.

"I hope, some day," said she, "to be able to prove to you that there has been no forwardness in my manner to Mr. Lindsay—that there was nothing you would think—" she stopped.

"Oh! curse him; let's have no more of the man. I'm sick of the subject. Go your own way, Eleanor; I'll go mine;" and with a gloomy and fierce change of manner, Sir Stephen gathered up the fishing-tackle, rod, and book of flies, which were spread on the table before him, and left the reading-room. Eleanor walked to the window and looked out. She saw her husband cross the lawn, and the broad gravel walk to the little wood adjoining the pleasure-ground. At the wicket-gate of the wood, lounged Bridget's eldest son, now a handsome lad of eleven or twelve. Young Owen took the rod and fishing-basket, and Sir Stephen, while he slung the latter over his shoulder, patted him kindly on the head. Then they both passed into the wood, and away to the trout-stream beyond. The tears came into Eleanor's eyes, for she thought of her own children. She turned from the window, and was preparing to leave the room when she was stopped by the hurried entrance of the Duchess of Lanark, looking extremely eager, and with an open letter in her hand.

"My dear Eleanor, I couldn't conceive where you were; I've hunted for you all over the house. How flushed you are! you look as if you'd been crying," and the duchess glanced round the apartment, as if to seek for some evidence of the cause of Eleanor's discomposure.

"I was thinking of my poor boys," said Eleanor, quickly.

"Oh! my dear Eleanor, I'm so sorry—dear me! But it's as well I came in, and disturbed you, for I really think you'd like to know the news in this letter. Who *do* you think is going to buy Dunleath of Mrs. Christison? now only guess," and with a pretty smile, and holding the letter behind her, as if fearful of the intelligence she came to convey, being instantly pounced upon, she awaited Eleanor's reply.

"You had better tell me at once," said the latter, gently; "I shall not guess; and if I could, you know you would only be disappointed."

"Well, so I should, because it's so strange; and yet it's the most natural thing in the world, only we none of us thought of it; and it's so lucky, you know, because we shall all be neighbors. Margaret is going to buy it."

"Margaret!"

"Yes, I thought I should surprise you. But here's her letter; she's on her way home; she'll be here in a few days; she says,

"'When I read that Dunleath was once more for sale, I could not help talking with our best of grandmothers about it, and about the happy days when the Stuart children and I used to play together, when she went over there from what they called the Great Place, Lanark's Lodge.

"'Do you wish you were rich enough to buy it?' said this pearl of grannies.

"'Do I wish that I were Queen of England, or any other impossible happy wish?' answered I.

"Then the pearl of grannies, with that dear benevolent smile, that I remember ever since I saw it over my cradle, said:

"'Margaret, I am a very old woman: I have lived a longer life than God grants in general to his creatures, and a very blessed, tranquil one it has been. If I were in the grave, where in the course of nature I should long ago have been, where I am sure I should be now, but for the magic of life and cheerfulness that springs out of living with you, my Margaret' (I am obliged to repeat granny's compliment, to make her after-behavior seem reasonable); 'you would be more than rich enough to buy Dunleath; and why should we wait till I am dead and gone to

make you happy? and Dunleath, meanwhile, be bought by some strange old maid like Tabitha Christison (you needn't read my letter out loud to Tabitha, Countess of Peebles) or some narrow-minded creature like her father, casting up sums of mingled speculation and peculation in the place where I remember that noble-hearted Mrs. Stuart, denying herself in vain to bring matters straight (that were crooked from more causes than Stuart's improvidence, depend upon that). No, my Margaret, you shall be lady of Dunleath. You shall walk under those grand old firs, where she walked, and sit by the sun-dial, as I've seen her sit many a summer's evening, when she was a young, happy wife, with 'wee toddling things' at her knee. You, and pretty little Euphemia, shall make a home of that place, and God give you a happy life there, long after you've laid my head in the grave; you are going to Scotland now, and you can make all your arrangements, and carry my instruction to my man of business in Edinburgh, and your brother will see that all is done in due form. And if you don't hurry back to Naples to thank me, I shall think you a most unnatural grand-daughter.'

"'O, pearl of grannies,' said I—but I shall tell you no more of what we said, only let Lanark prepare to add my name to the list of 'neebors' near Lanark's Lodge, for I am to be Lady of Dunleath. Sweet Dunleath! my heart beats only to think of it, and to think I shall have a home for life so near you all. What an idle country-life it shall be! I will do nothing but make bowers, pick up fir-cones, gather violets and primroses in the hedges, and cowslips in the meadows; link dandelion-chains, pull off daisy leaves one by one to see if I have a love who really loves me (a fact I have not leisure at present to ascertain), and otherwise enjoy the 'otium sine dignitate,' which is my notion of holiday-making. Let other follies take their 'otium cum,' if they please, but it spoils the thing, as cream spoils wood-strawberries. God bless you all. M. F."

"She has not got our letters," said Eleanor, when the duchess paused. "She has not heard, evidently, that Mr. Stuart is alive, and that my fortune has been replaced."

"No; letters wander so, abroad; but it would make no difference, you know, as to Dunleath. Mr. Stuart couldn't buy it, at all events. The duke told me that none of the men engaged in those schemes had preserved any amount of private property. He has contrived to pay yours back; but he did not cover his own legacy, or, at least, only a little fraction of it; and Nevil's children had little or nothing—nor Weston's—so Lanark told me. But perhaps Margaret will get your letter at Lyons; she has ordered them all to be sent to wait her there. I have no doubt you will hear from her before she returns. Come out now, Eleanor; it will do you good; you look so ill. Let us take a little walk:" and the duchess passed her arm through Eleanor's, with a girlish sort of coaxing manner, which she adopted when she wished to be very kind. And she was kind; though she was a little affected, and very coquettish; because, as Margaret, the future Lady of Dunleath, said, 'we must all have *faults.*'

Happy are they who can so balance that fact, by general amiability, as to obtain from those they love and live familiarly with, the eloquently playful compliment once paid by a husband, on the anniversary of his marriage, to the mother of his wife, namely, that though he knew, of course, her daughter must have faults, in a twelve years' union he had not discovered what they were.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MARGARET wrote to Eleanor a post or two later, having received all her letters. She was, as she described herself to be, "positively wild with gladness at the good news;" the sentences of her letter beamed like so many rays of sunshine. Full of wonder, full of merriment, full of earnestness, full of thanksgivings; her heart seemed like a bird that had escaped from prison, and fluttering in all the rapture of freedom, dipped the wings of its joy to earth, only to soar again to heaven.

Alive, and not disgraced (for she would not admit that David was disgraced), she looked forward to see him some day in Scotland. She told Eleanor to question Mr. Lindsay as to how he looked, what he said, how he had borne his life of drudgery and pain. She was impatient to see Mr. Lindsay and talk of David with him. She did not know exactly when she should arrive, because Phemy had a slight attack of fever, and must rest from traveling for a few days; but they were not to write to her again, only to expect her. Mr. Lindsay was to expect her too; he was to try and get up a measure of gladness, to answer the extreme joy she would feel in seeing him as David's friend and representative. She should love him, if he was the crabbedest old clerk that ever came out of a counting-house, and envied Eleanor being able to see and talk to him all day long. He was by no means to go till she had seen him. A few days more or less in Scotland could make no difference to him, and made all the difference to her. She thanked Eleanor for writing to her, even in the first agitated day, to tell her all; thanked her and blessed her. "God bless you! and God bless poor David Stuart! and may we all meet some day in peace and happiness after these hard trials, and thank heaven together for its many mercies."

Oh! had they lied—even to Margaret! A restless sigh escaped from Eleanor's heart, as she read the concluding sentence. She longed for, yet dreaded, the moment of Margaret's arrival, when she could take her into her own room, and inform her of the deception practiced, and beg her to keep their secret; that secret which every day Eleanor more earnestly wished had never been to be kept. What would Margaret think? What would she do? An instinct of her disapproval smote heavily on Eleanor. Margaret's brightness! Margaret's frankness! Pure was her spirit's home: truth stood at the portal, to guard the world of sunny clearness beyond. Eleanor thought of her lovely friend till she felt quite guilty; she conjured up a vision of Margaret listening to her communication, he saw her countenance, bright, amazed, ma-

jestic, and grieved, like the countenance of an angel made the witness of sin. She thought of her arrival with a mixture of fear. Fear—at meeting Margaret! There was no possibility, however, of remedying matters by writing to her now; they must abide by what they had done; they could only await the event: and they waited.

Eleanor talked with David Stuart of Margaret's return, and her fears; but he did not view it with the same anxiety. He was beginning to feel despondent, reckless, abased. It no longer appeared to him of the same importance that his secret should be safe. Nothing seemed of the same importance; known or not known, he never could lift off the leaden chains in which his original fault had bound him. Known or not known, he never could be aught to Eleanor but a pardoned friend. When he left America, that was to him the extremest limit of hope. Where was the change? What did he desire now to be to Eleanor? He did not ask himself. A confused feverish rebellion of griefs swelled in his heart. He wanted dead years and vanished days to return. He wanted to stand again in the glorious position of being able to protect Eleanor. He wanted to see her in the blessed position of free choice. He wanted to tread the flowery road of an unknown future; and lo! the adamantine bars of the imprisoning past!

The first time he ever heard Sir Stephen speak violently and discourteously to his wife (and Sir Stephen did not, as the French say, *gêner* himself before company)—the first time he ever heard the athlete, whose good looks he had thought calculated to win feminine fancy, *swear* at Eleanor. Astonishment, for a moment, overbore all resentment. His amazement was so extreme, that it stood single in his heart, unaccompanied by any other feeling. Then a fierce contempt—an almost wild defiance—shadowed his countenance like a cloud, and passed, and left him pale. He felt that he had lost the right, and with the right the power, to shield Eleanor. He was to sit there, and hear her sworn at!—Eleanor, the little, fragile darling of his youth, whom he remembered gazing on with such wonder! knowing nothing of children and their ways, listening to her discourse, as to a bird's song, or fall of tiny bells; thinking it musical and sweet, but not sure at first if there were meaning in its melody; taking her little light hand to lead her forth among sunshine and flowers; nursing her in illness; teaching her in health; loving her always—always!—Eleanor, whom he remembered a young, fair girl, slight, and shy, and delicate, with a sort of timid playfulness of manner that never quite rose to merriment, and an earnestness of thought and feeling that never forsook her even on trivial subjects—Eleanor to whom his own voice used involuntarily to soften when he spoke, as we soften our voices to children, as though roughness and carelessness might hurt such a gentle creature, even as the east wind may bruise a white rose—Eleanor, who had summoned up the strength of her soul to tell him she loved him, and failed—who *had* loved him better than all the world! His Eleanor, *his* Eleanor, confided to his sole charge by her dying father—his Eleanor, whom he carried out in his arms whither he would, wherever it was brightest, in those blessed, anxious days of yore, when she was too weak to walk, after her fever—his Eleanor, that he had imaged to himself, while he toiled and repented in the wilderness and the dark woods of America and the silence of his lonely log-cabin, a happy, rich, contented young wife, not needing his toil, which was penance, not service; blessed in her love, and blessing with her beauty and goodness the home she had found, when the home at Aspendale was bereft her—his Eleanor, disposed of arbitrarily, by his consent—on his earnest advising—by the fatal necessity of a position which he himself—he only—had entailed upon her.

Alas! for human error! *Then* was the time to judge her husband; *then* was the time to protect her; *then* was the time to sit making bitter, heart-broken reflections on the sacredness of choice; on the sin of thrusting marriage on a young girl, as a question of expediency; on the madness of encouraging her to sign away the bond of her life blindfold, and balance the advantages afterward. *Then*, love was permitted by God, and authority delegated by man; and Help could have easily done all that Help's wild half-brother, Rescue, might struggle in vain to achieve.

Oh! then—and now! Oh! gentle, saddened, weary-hearted Eleanor!—his Eleanor! No—not his: never to be his! though his forever by the holy bond of wedlock, she had herself planned and wished to be; though the riches he had seized, and the heart he had thrown to another, had once been at his feet! The lack of a whispered sentence—the failure of her tongue when she would have uttered his name, had blighted the future of both. If it were only his life that had been made miserable! But hers was embittered!—he saw it was. A few days since, and he thought with jealous disturbance of the love she might bear her husband: was he nearer peace now?—now that he saw she did not, and could not love him?

Wild, savage stories floated through David's mind; incidents he had known among the fierce, lithe people he had mingled with so long; the nimble slayers of their hated foes; cunning and barbarous, yet pitiable; with the passions of men, and the feelings of children. He remembered an Indian who had tracked his enemy for days, and caught him at last and killed him; his yells of triumph as he held up the scalp by its long black hair, twisted with feathers, and dangling ornaments of beads and bone. He remembered another, whose squaw had been carried away, and his child killed; and who, after killing his enemy, stuck three arrows through his breast "for the child's three summers," and then begged David to put him to death with his own hatchet, "because he had felt his enemy's heart, and it was cold and quiet, and his heart burned, and he wished it to be cold and quiet too." He reflected how, in that far land, DEATH was the umpire between men who hated and strove; but here, LIFE—here, long years of patient expectation, and waiting for strange chances. What chance could free Eleanor?

And with the last wild thought, the heart of the Christian man leaped back in horror, like one who in dreams has crept to the edge of a precipice; and with a shuddering earnestness he humbled himself in prayer. Forgiveness for the past, strength for the present. In the past,

it had been a sacred duty to interfere, to guide, to counsel, to protect; and in those days he had failed. It had now become a sacred duty *not* to interfere—*not* to advise—*not* to cross the hallowed boundary that divides even a wronged wife from such sympathy as he could offer: would he stand?

He strove to stand. Eleanor's own manner was a help to him: she was sadder, graver, more distant.' That stood between them, which either divides or rivets—consciousness. It divided them. It is always easier to a woman than to a man, to admit what the Portuguese motto calls "the impossibility of possible things." The boundaries of duty, religion, and social necessity, are walls round a woman's heart, and light fences round a man's—so high, so blank, so difficult to her, that often she never even looks beyond, or, having looked, drops back with a sighing farewell to the world of hope without; so easy, so little of a bar to him, that let passion but spur him, and he leaps at once.

Eleanor had no thought of David Stuart that could stand between her and her prayers, or embitter them. She had loved him in girlhood; but that love seemed to her among things of the past. The simple *possibility* of loving him, or any man, did not occur to her. She felt a certain shame at his knowing what she had once striven to tell him: a certain comfort, mingled with terror, at seeing that he had been glad she had loved him, and yet seemed to respect her still; and she looked to his departure in a few days as an inevitable event, after which, she scarcely knew why, it would be easier to her to write expressions of tender kindness to America, than it had been to speak them in Scotland. She planned, sometimes, sentences of affectionate explanation, for she saw he was grieved; but she never planned them without first imagining the rolling waves of the Atlantic between David and herself. Sometimes her young heart, looking back to the past—

"Ached with the thoughts of all that might have been,"

but never for one wandering moment did it look to what might be.

With David Stuart all was different and contrary. From the hour when he became conscious that he himself had been the object of her early attachment, the thought of her love haunted him like a dream. In the stillness of night; in the busy hours of the day; alone, or among those who surrounded him, that thought was ever present. It was a thought without form, and void, and darkness on the face of the deep, till he saw what her married life was; and then it glimmered into shape like a buoy at sea; tossing stormily, restless ever, but anchored in the very depths of his soul. He clung to it like a drowning man, waiting for further aid. She had loved him; she was his ideal of perfection; she was unhappy, unvalued in her home. Out of these miserable disjointed circumstances, he framed nothing; but he ceaselessly thought of them, and of her. When last he saw her, he had thought of her as a mere child—his dead benefactor's child, whom he had wronged; his heart was too full of despair and shame, to be free for passion. He met her now a beautiful, wretched woman; yes, wretched; he could not doubt it; *(though he did not yet know all; for among the subjects Eleanor had never adverted to,* was Bridget Owen and the lodge by the gate); he thought of her and her wretchedness all day long.

So the days passed, with more or less brightness, and more or less shadow, and Margaret's coming drew more and more near.

CHAPTER XL.

"ELEANOR," said the Duchess of Lanark, "Mr. Lindsay and I have been planning a pilgrimage: that is to say," added she, looking toward him and smiling, "*I* planned the pilgrimage, and he consented to put on his sandals, or his boots, and come and visit the shrine. We want to have a day at Dunleath. He really ought to see it, for his friend's sake, as I have been telling him. We want to take sandwiches, and fowls, and grouse, and biscuit, and make a pic-nic under those jagged old firs; for the place is empty now, and we shall not have old Mrs. Christison to give us ten luncheons in one. We want to set out very early, and come back very late, or else sleep at Lanark's Lodge, which will be nearer than returning here, and would give me the pleasure of receiving Mr. Lindsay at my own house;" and the lovely eyes seemed to draw up a sort of curtain of eyelashes, and drop them again, for the benefit of the Quebec merchant. "Now do, Eleanor; I do so love an expedition. We have not had an expedition I don't know when. You are much stronger and better than you used to be; I don't think a long day would tire you at all, and it would be *such* a pleasure to me!"

And the duchess involuntarily thought of her own extreme prettiness, sitting opposite to Mr. Lindsay in the open carriage, talking to him from under a little pink and white parasol, as unlike Lady Macfarren's parasols as possible, and in a costume that neither partook of the panoply style of that Amazon nor of the paraphernalia and regalia pattern of the gorgeous Tib; indeed, if there were a defect in the duchess's dress, it was that you were compelled by it always to feel anxious about her; she never seemed, in feminine phrase, to "have enough on:" if a shower sprinkled the dust, you involuntarily looked round for some stray extra shawl to wrap round the duchess; if you had to cross the grass or heather, you could not help glancing at the duchess's feet, which, to borrow the description of Sir John Suckling in his bridal poem—

"Like little mice, stole in and out,"

with dainty minuteness, from under her petticoat; and like little mice, also, seemed to be covered by some very thin little coat; but she called the little coverings "her boots;" and they passed for boots, and had all the appearance of boots; copied in miniature and enameled. Every thing else she had on, seemed to be made up of clouds of silk and gossamer, in which she looked lovely, and light, but a little cold: yet you could not make up your mind what to advise; for the things she wore, seemed quite as heavy as you could expect her to wear. How upon earth, with that slender, pliant little figure, that transparent pink and white complexion, and those tiny wrists, was she to wear solid clothes, like robust women? It really was a comfort to

see the footman lift in after her a Maltese spaniel, which lay in her lap, or by her side, and you felt it might help to keep her warm. It had a profusion of long white silky hair. It was a very mite among dogs; but she said that she could not have endured a great, ragged monster like Eleanor's Ruellach, looking as if it were, in fact, no dog at all, but the wolf that pretended to be Red Riding Hood's grandmother. The duchess was *mignonne*—she was more—(I mean she was less), she was absolutely *mignonnette*, and she knew it, and was proud of it.

Like Queen Elizabeth, who, when informed of Queen Mary's stature, replied: "Then is she too tall, for I myself am of a just height." The duchess thought other women too big, and that she herself was of the just size. Littleness was loveliness; and she had a Liliputian horror of Brobdignag measurements. Tib's sash appeared to her to be calculated to perform the task of Ariel, and "put a girdle round about the earth."

All Tib's proportions seemed to her to be monstrous. She longed to try upon the ankle of the obese Dagoness the assertion of those who have lived in India—that three times round the foot of a full-grown elephant is his height. She believed it might be so, in this instance.

One of the provoking things she had often done to Tib (and she did a great many provoking things, in her own *mignonne* way), was to sit contemplating her fat, coarse hand, as though it had been a large curiosity, exposed on purpose for inspection; insomuch that she nearly broke Tib of a habit she had of crumpling up her handkerchief, and resting the closed fist that contained it, on the table while she talked; for which Tib ought to have been much obliged to the duchess, for it was an awkward trick; but I don't know that she was grateful

She could not contemplate that giant fist on the present occasion, for gorgeous Tabitha had accepted Lady Macfarren's offer to drive her to the pic-nic expedition at Dunleath in the phaeton: an exercise extremely agreeable to that stern female, though generally dreaded by her friends, inasmuch as her driving resembled the furious driving of Jehu. However, Tib was not timid, and, in due time, Sir Stephen's tall sister appeared on the terrace steps, compressing her whip under her elbow, while she drew on a pair of buckskin gauntlets. She eyed the horses with a glance of mingled severity and skill; and having felt the fetlock of one, which she pronounced to be "groggy," and altered the bit of the other, so as to bear a tighter curb, with a careless intimation to the groom to "do his own work next time, and not leave it to her," she gave the final word of command:

"Now then, Leddy Peebles, up with you; and if the horses are a little fresh at starting, never mind. I'll master them, or know the reason why."

Sir Stephen Penrhyn, and Lord Peebles, attended by Mr. Malcolm, were gone to a cattle-show at Carrick, and were not to return till the next morning; but the open carriage was happily occupied by the duke, David, Eleanor, and the gossamer duchess, who anxiously inquired if they had put in her "great wrap," in case it was damp in the evening. The great wrap was found, and turned out to be a square of very fine spun wool and silk woven into a tartan pattern, which the duchess said had been contrived for her "by the dear good old schoolmistress of her own school at Lanark's Lodge." She also had her schools; which she did not exactly attend like Eleanor, but where she sometimes alighted, like a beneficent fairy, to give prizes; and secretly to wonder at all the children knew, and at the answers they contrived to make to questions which would have posed their patroness—a feeling, perhaps not utterly unknown to many persons far wiser than the duchess, who have listened to the examination of national or parochial schools; happily protected by their quality of bystanders from the puzzling queries which somehow or other always elicit shrill responses, high up, or low down in the class; but which I really think many of the examiners would themselves have some difficulty in solving. Among the proofs given by a Government Commission of stupidity in the children of a Welsh school, was their failure in the interrogative problem, "What is an angel?" Now, my dear reader, if you were suddenly asked "what is an angel?" when you were not occupied with beatific visions, but were staring at educational commissioners, and wondering what would come next, would you have an answer ready? We have all our vague notions of angels—but if you were called upon thus, at a minute's notice to become analytic and descriptive, and to make other persons comprehend your private idea of an angel, could you do it? I do not think the school-children were stupid for not answering the angelic question; I think the marvel rather is the sort of questions they *do* contrive to answer; and I think we might put one great leading question to ourselves, and that is, whether we are altogether on the right tack in the sort of instruction we give to the poorer classes? Whether, for the benefit of lives so much more material and less intellectual than our own, more simple and practical teaching would not be better? What becomes of all that word-knowledge? It goes to keep company with the book-knowledge of gentlemen who turn out Dominie Sampsons, unfit for the practical affairs of life. It stands like screen-work, between the poor and their real, busy, work-a-day world; sometimes, perhaps, becoming absolutely feverish and dangerous nourishment, for minds that have no leisure for problems. We train up our poor in the way they should *not* go. We can not give them leisure, yet leisure is the balance-weight they would need for the sort of instruction we afford them. And this is more especially the case with the female part of our population.

As long as our school-girls answer more readily to such questions as 'Where is Kamtschatka?' 'How do the Laplanders prepare their food?' 'What is a fixed star?' 'Who is Prince Albert?' 'What is Death said to ride in the Revelations?' 'How much is 426 times 1247?' instead of the more natural interrogations, 'What are the habits of an English laborer?' 'How much flour and suet will make a pudding for six?' 'how many yards of cotton or linen will cut into twelve shirts?' 'What remedies would you apply if a child were seized with croup, and no medical help at hand?' English education for the lower classes is at fault.

We teach a smattering of subjects we ourselves find it extremely difficult to master, and commit to memory, though we have, what the poor have not, the habit of thought and the luxury of leisure; and then we send them into the world, to begin lives of manual exertion, daily privation, retail purchasing, and cottage industry; where every farthing wasted and lost is a drop of the poor man's blood drained away. Having taught them what is a fixed star—who is Prince Albert—how dead bodies were embalmed in Egypt—what is the meaning of doubling a promontory, we are amazed they can not keep house for John Diggory. We are amazed that they can not lay by like the ant, build like the beaver, and rear their broods as easily as chickens; we raise an angry outcry at the "stupid improvidence of the poor;" whereas it is often the stupid improvidence of the rich. We sow tares, and we want to reap wheat; since the sturdy opinion of the village chandler, in an old fashioned book, entitled "Ward's Rhyming Dialogues" (whose grains of corn in a peck of chaff, have been long lost and forgotten), might really be written up with advantage on the walls of every national school-room in Great Britain:

"I tell thee, wife, I'll have our daughter bred
To book'ry, cook'ry, thimble, needle, thread;
Make her expert and ready at her prayers,
That God may keep her from the devil's snares;
Teach her what's useful; how to shun deluding;
To roast, to toast, to boil, and mix a pudding;
To knit, to spin, to sew, to make, to mend,
To scrub, to rub, to earn, and not to spend;
With all such hussifry as well becomes
A wife for one that deals in mops and brooms:
That when she's wed, she may not think it scandal
To serve a neighbor with a farthing candle."

This was the opinion of Ward's village chandler, and a very sensible opinion it is. The object of all training is to fit a person for the probable occupations and duties of life; yet it can not be denied that we frequently attempt to teach the poor, things which have as much reference to their future usefulness as if we gave them lessons in rope-dancing.

Such sage reflections as these, however, formed no portion of the thoughts of the agreeable party in the open carriage. I fear if David Stuart had been suddenly cross-examined as to his idea of an angel, it would have taken a form much resembling Eleanor; and each of the four being a good deal wrapped in their own cogitations, would have been apt to give somewhat disconnected answers.

Mr. Lindsay had accepted (for how could he refuse?) the proposal of the charming little duchess to "make him a holiday at that pretty place, Dunleath, which had once belonged to the family of his poor friend in America;" but he felt as if he were journeying to it, through the land of dreams, and the valley of the shadow of death.

Eleanor was thinking of Margaret—happy Margaret, who was to live forever at Dunleath; and of the days when she hung the walls of her own little dressing-room at Aspendale with copies of the views taken at this Highland place, and thought to buy it, and bestow it on her guardian.

Later dreams, too—dreams of days when she had planned to bestow herself, and all her riches, *on that beloved guardian*, recurred, in spite of *the mind's strife against them.*

As the carriage bore them onward to that prized, that ruined home, for which so much had been suffered and lost, her heart yearned to the protector of her childhood, the friend of her youth. She looked at him as he sate gazing out at the passing country, with soft, sorrowful eyes, while the color deepened in her cheek. As if he felt her glance upon him, warm as a stray sunbeam, David turned, and met it—met it, before it could change or be withdrawn; before her shrinking soul could gather back any of its wealth of love and pity. He met it with a start so obvious, that the duke also started from a rumination about some paper-mills he was going to establish on his estate, and observed that they were "all wonderfully silent for a pleasure-party." And forthwith David began to talk, and to look glad, and animated, and eager; and the pretty duchess, as she answered and smiled from under the miniature canopy of her favorite parasol, thought what a sensation Mr. Lindsay would have made in London, if he had but been one of that privileged group whom she knew as the great world. The gloom of the past seemed to lift from their minds, like the mists from the hills after sunrise. They talked merrily; they laughed. David Stuart told stories of the wild Indians, and adventures in the Far West. The duchess sang "Will ye gang to the Hielands, Lizzy Lindsay?" which she said was out of compliment to Mr. Lindsay, though the Lizzie of his clan (for she would always have it that he belonged to the clan) had not behaved with great discretion in taking the vaunting stranger at his word, and marching off on so short a wooing; and then she laughed still more merrily, because the duke quoted against her

"Happy's the wooing
That's not long a-doing."

And then she sang "He's coming again," and other Jacobite ditties, and afterward "I would I were whar Gowdie rises;" at the end of which ballad, she said she was tired, and stopped like a little musical box that had run down.

So they talked, and sang, and laughed, and paused, and discussed the lovely scenery through which they passed, till they reached the avenue of Dunleath, with high, broken banks, where irregular glimpses of sunlight shone down on the peacock's hues of Tib's many-colored raiment, sitting in the phaeton before them, and on the silent track which was henceforth to be the road to Margaret's home.

CHAPTER XLI.

They had a happy day at deserted Dunleath: even Tib, in the pride of possessing all the information Lady Macfarren was eager to acquire, respecting the value of every item on the property, had no time to be spiteful, but took, with the Danaë of Glencarrick, a sort of factor and bailiff stroll—hither and thither wheresoever Danaë most desired to pry; discussing what Margaret had paid, or would have to pay for every thing, even to the eleven turkeys and fourteen fowls in the hen-yard; but Danaë was familiar with the whereabouts; for she had, as

the reader knows, been in habits of intimacy with Mr. Peter Christison "and all his family," as she herself always had the grace to add, though it was an addition which at one time she would fain have made a sum in subtraction.

And if Mr. Lindsay could not quite sustain to perfection the character of an utter stranger in the place where he was born and bred, yet there was not much that could have betrayed him. He was so abstracted on first entering the precincts of that changed and formalized paradise, that he really had the air of not knowing where he was. He was completely on his guard, for he had done little else but reflect ever since the pic-nic had been proposed, how strange and trying it would be, to be taken to see that place as a show and an amusement, which had been the home of his childhood—the dream of his youth—and the cause of eight years of his manhood being passed in exile and shame! Luckily for him many of the walks had been altered, trees cut down, and shrubberies planted, so that the duchess really had a very decent excuse for putting forth her little hand and twitching him by the sleeve, as he was making a wrong turn to approach the house; telling him that he was very stupid, and that she should be obliged to lead him in a collar and string, like Fido, if he did not follow better. They went into the house, and flung open the shutters of the upper rooms, and looked out on the view, from the window of the chamber that had been David's own in boyhood. They passed through what had once been the nursery, full of shouting, merry, lovely children; the one room where Mrs. Stuart still saw a gleam of life's joy, when it faded out of the other apartments of that anxious home.

They visited what had been her favorite little morning-room on the ground-floor, opening into a green-house, where the old *corcyrus agronica* still trailed its branches against the wall, covered with star-like yellow flowers, as of yore; and where "the daughters of the roses," which her gentle hand used to gather, had gone on succeeding each other from summer to summer, changing without a difference. There stood the little myrtle-trees from which many a nosegay had been enriched. The long festoons of passion-flower waved outside. The periwinkle and violet plants grew thick as ever round the steps by which the wandering party re-entered the garden. The great bush of sweet-briar, that had been the friend of David's earliest, childish years (when spring-buds and spring-flowers give such delight as after-years can never match), also stood up in the sunshine a silent witness of departed joy, and of vanished grief.

None can ever tell, among the thousand memories of the past, what will touch them most. Hearts that are nerved, and bear unshaken, what to lookers-on might seem the most likely things to move them, will break down before some trivial image—some unexpected turn of thought. So I have seen people talk calmly, even cheerfully at times, of their dead; and, lo! some chance-word upon another occasion, some strain of music, some scene in a picture, some breath of wind, will send forth a spirit strong enough to lift off the stone that covers the sealed fountain of their tears, sealed, not dried up.

As David stepped out into the sunshine with Eleanor, his eye fell on the bush of sweet-briar, and he put out his hand to gather a spray. Even in the act, one of those mysterious touches of feeling I have alluded to, smote him to the soul. The sudden vision of his glad, childish self, running out before his mother in the early spring for a branch of the sweet-briar, with its leaves still in bud, and scarcely scented; the voice of that dear and beautiful mother, singing as she took it,

"There grows a bonny briar-bush in our kail-yard,"

the breath of the sweet springs of departed years, the great miseries that had followed, the desolation that was yet to come, when he should turn away once more from Scotland, and all it held, of memory, or vaguest hope, burst over David's heart in a flood of bitterness. His outstretched hand dropped by his side; he leaned against the doorway with averted face, and a groan of anguish escaped him.

That moment of anguish none beheld but Eleanor. The duchess had begged the duke to take a cutting from a rare species of geranium, and lingered in the green-house, watching the operation. Tib and Lady Macfarren (the latter with the account-book in hand, which was always her pocket-companion) were calculating what the right of shooting over Dunleath might fetch, if Margaret were to let it. Only Eleanor saw David; and in that hour she saw nothing in earth or heaven, *but* that man, and his grief. With a gentle but impassioned gesture, she took his hand, and, bowing her head down on it, she sobbed out:

"Oh, David Stuart!—oh, dear, dear friend!"

Her cheek seemed to rest for an instant on his hand while she spoke—the breath of her words passed over it—the plaited tresses of her hair swept smooth and light across it in the momentary contact—so momentary that he might almost have doubted the sense of touch; but the tone of her voice—the depth of her sympathy—who could doubt that?'

"Eleanor," said he, with wild vehemence, "love me—pity me—remember me—for you are all that links me to life: but for you I could only desire that all this had an end in the grave."

And Eleanor did not shrink, but said, fervently:

"Rely upon it, that while I live, I never can cease to think of you with the deepest affection, with the sincerest sympathy; if I were dying, you would be my last thought upon earth. We shall meet again in the onward years. You see how natural Margaret thought it, that you should return to Scotland, that the past should be buried. You shall return, and Dunleath shall seem bright to you again. I feel it—I know it; though the how and the when are in God's hands."

With tearful, radiant eyes, Eleanor Penrhyn looked up to heaven, as if invoking it for the truth of her prophecy. Would such prophecy ever come to pass?

Think no more of that; hasten to be as usual; for here come Lady Macfarren and Tib. Lady Macfarren is hungry, and longs for cold grouse, and roe-deer pastry; and Tib is rather tired of seeing her money-loving friend bite the point of her pencil, previous to a rapid setting down, and an almost equally rapid casting-up of sums, whose monotony seemed to her to be but slightly relieved by a perpetual change of figures. Tib

never could cast up a sum in her life; and she thinks it a dreary employment, and a waste of time and ingenuity; and Tib is hot and thirsty with driving and walking, and wishes for sherry and water, or whisky and water, or claret without water, or even a good glass of Scotch ale; all of which various liquids she knows are in the hamper, under what the duchess calls, "those jagged old firs."

So they go to the jagged old firs, and they spread out their festival, and carouse; and the duchess says she will teach Mr. Lindsay "Here's a health to all good lasses," and "We're nae that fou'—" for that it is proper on such occasions, that drinking-songs should be sung, and the duke never will sing, and ladies can't sing drinking-songs. And the duke, smiling at his little, spoiled, coquettish, but dearly-beloved wife, says he will sing that minute, and that every one ought to sing. And he and David, and the duchess sing, "The banks and braes o' bonny Doon," in parts, and are startled by the immense Dagoness (who has by this time quenched her thirst in each of the four different ways that the hamper made possible) joining in, in a weak, quivering voice, a good deal out of tune in the upper notes, and closing her lips when she forgets the words, so as to produce a singular *voce di testa*, and a strange humming. And while she sings, the sly little duchess has once more an opportunity of torturing her feelings by a contemplation of the large hand with which (for the better keeping of time) she beats her large knee. And Tib perceives those naughty, beautiful eyes fixed on her big hand; and Tib is angry, and reddens, and stops singing; and the duchess laughs, and asks her why, and then they all stop; and Tib reaches out her big hand and grasps the bottle of sherry, and fills another tumbler of sherry and water, and pretends not to hear the duchess, but observes that "people ought to know when they have had enough of a good thing;" and the duchess mischievously asks, whether she means good things to eat and drink, and Tib reddens still more, and says, "Songs!" with an angry snort, till, at length, the duke remarks that it is getting late, and they had better have the carriages ordered, and the great wrap brought, and think of getting home to Lanark's Lodge; and the duchess, calling off her eyes from worrying Tib's hand, and looking up at Mr. Lindsay, observes that it will be deliciously lovely, for it is so late that they must have moonlight part of the way. So they all move away from the shelter of the grand old firs, Tib looking extremely fat and flushed, and Lady Maefarren resolutely resuming the gauntlets and bonnet, which she had laid on the grass, as though some trumpet had once more summoned her to arms. The duke hastening onward a little to order the carriages, the duchess follows with Eleanor and Mr. Lindsay, explaining to him all the mottoes round the sun-dial, which is the one thing they have not yet visited with a special inspection. Now they will go and read the mottoes, while they wait for the carriages, and look at the sculptured base, which was a Greek altar in ancient days; and Eleanor smiles gently at David, and his eyes reply to hers, that this is the old sun-dial they used to *talk* of in happy times at Aspendale, the lovely piece of antique marble, whose graceful sculpture was copied by Eleanor from his own drawings, and they two have a sympathy in all this that the rest can not have.

But lo! as they walked toward the altar-sun-dial some one is already there!—a lady—a lady and a little girl: the lady is stooping over the dial, looking at the sculpture; the little girl gives a glad shout; the duke stops, with a joyous exclamation hastens forward, and folds the lady in his arms. It *is* Margaret—his peerless Margaret! God bless her! Radiant and brilliant, and fond as ever! All is confusion and hurry: she kisses Eleanor; she begins a broken sentence about the strong temptation, only just to have one look at the place, now her own, and which she must pass the very gates of, on her way to Lanark's Lodge. And did they expect her?—and how lucky they met! for she did not know if they would be at Castle Penrhyn, or at the Lodge. But in the very midst of Margaret's rapid words, her breath fails, her lovely coral mouth remains open—speechless with surprise; then, darting forward to Mr. Lindsay, and taking both his hands at once in her own, she said:

"They never told me you had arrived! but I've missed many of my letters, I dare say. Oh. David Stuart! how more than glad—how blest I feel at seeing you, even you yourself can not guess!" and Margaret burst into tears.

There was some attempt at explanation, but to no purpose; Margaret wept and laughed, and gave vent to her joy in passionate exclamations, and broken phrases addressed alternately to Eleanor and David; clasping and unclasping her hands, speaking rapidly and fondly, looking up in his pale face, where gladness struggled with distress and embarrassment. At length something strange seemed to strike her, in the manner of all present—in Tib's triumphant smile, in Lady Maefarren's astonished glare.

"Where is Mr. Lindsay?" said Margaret, looking round.

"Ech! whar indeed!" said Tib, with a snort of delight; "I'm thinking ye'll have to dig for him under your friend's feet, for he's just the root of Mr. Stuart, and naething else."

Margaret looked in amazement from one to the other. Eleanor, her lips blanched, her whole frame trembling, both hands clasped on Margaret's arm, faltered out:

"Mr. Stuart called himself Mr. Lindsay—not liking to be known!" And then the duke broke the spell that seemed to chain every one to the spot, by approaching his sister.

"Margaret, my dearest, be composed," said he. "Mr. Stuart, from a very false feeling of shame for early rashness, has imposed on himself the penance of living among old friends as a stranger. He and I will ride on together to Lanark's Lodge; the grooms can go in the rumble of the carriage; Do you and Eleanor take the phaeton; the duchess will, I am sure, feel much pleasure in having the company of Lady Peebles and Lady Maefarren in the britzska; and we will all meet again at dinner-time."

And before the surprised, offended eyes of the pretty duchess had recovered from their wide, startled stretch of astonishment, the pic-nic party were once more on the road.

CHAPTER XLII.

"Mr. Stuart," said the duke, breaking the awkward silence which had subsisted for some minutes after the two gentlemen had mounted their horses, "I half expected this. I made sure, ever since the evening of that unfortunate conversation at the Castle, between Mr. Malcolm and Lady Peebles, which filled you with just indignation, that there was some mystery; and that possibly you yourself were the person whose representative you assumed to be. I saw Eleanor's agitation that night; I saw the gesture, rapid as it was, by which she endeavored to prevent your betraying yourself. I reflected on the fact of your being known to be living; on the extreme and familiar kindness of Eleanor's manner (she who is reserved with strangers to a fault), and afterward, on many little circumstances I should probably never have noticed, but for that scene of alarm. I expected that, sooner or later, we should have a discovery of this sort. And now," added he, with one of those frank smiles which gave his countenance something better than beauty, "will you forgive my saying that I think you were unnecessarily imprudent in returning to this country under a feigned name? that you have created difficulties where there need have been none, and that Sir Stephen Penrhyn will be the last person in the world to comprehend—" The duke stopped.

"When I first arrived here," said David, in an agitated voice; "I had no idea that I should remain long enough to make it a matter of the smallest importance or risk, by what name I called myself. I came here for one sole purpose—to see Eleanor, and receive her forgiveness, on which I built, on which I counted, which I never for one moment doubted," pursued he, earnestly, "but which I yearned to hear from her own lips. I took my passage in the name by which alone I was known at Quebec, the name I have borne for eight years. I had every reason to feel that I had stained the name of Stuart, and I loathed the idea of exposing myself to a malevolent curiosity. But I did wrong and rashly; I feel it; and believe me, I also feel your generosity, coming as it does from one so entirely a stranger to me."

"Mr. Stuart," said the duke, kindly, "I will not admit that the son of my father's nearest neighbor, and my mother's dearest friend, and the favorite companion of my sister's childhood, is so entirely a stranger to me as you would have it. I have heard so much of you from Margaret, and in happier days from Eleanor, that we need very little introduction to each other. It would ill become me to judge your position and your actions with any feelings but those of sympathy and indulgence; and believe me, these to the full extent of my nature are yours. I can conceive no more bitter trial on earth than that you underwent, when you found Eleanor's fortune involved by the rashness of those with whom you so unwisely speculated. I can conceive no more dreary penance than that in which, for eight years you had the courage to persevere, unsustained by any hope of being able to do more than to win back an inconsiderable portion of what you had risked, uncheered by the friendship of any human being to whom you were personally known. I am glad this concealment is at end. I am sure, upon reflection, you will rejoice at the event, and not regret it; and that you will not owe my peerless Margaret so much ill-will for the discovery, as to refuse to pay us a visit at Lanark's Lodge before you return to America, and while she is also with us."

David Stuart could not speak; but he held out his hand, and wrung that of the noble-hearted and kindly gentleman who rode at his side.

The duke returned the cordial pressure; and with a gay, "Now let us ride like less moody and indolent cavaliers," he spurred his horse to overtake the carriages.

It was true, when the false Mr. Lindsay came to reflect upon the subject, that it was a relief to have nothing further to conceal; a relief to have his morbid shame reasoned away by the kind, frank voice of the duke; a relief to feel unchecked by the fear of any other discovery; and as they drew bridle before the magnificent old castle that bore the simple name of Lanark's Lodge, David Stuart felt something more nearly akin to happiness than he had known for many a long year.

But the sylph-like duchess, who had made the moonlight drive in such very different company from what she had desired and expected in the morning, was by no means so well pleased as her duke. So, all the time she had been condescending to attract the American merchant, showing him what Paradise was, that he might, on his return to Quebec, live in a sort of exalted vision of the duchess he had once known in Scotland—all this time she had been the dupe of Eleanor (who no doubt looked on with amusement), and the dupe of Mr. Stuart, the speculating guardian whose conduct she had so often called in question.

The duchess thought of all this with a hot, angry burning at her heart. She was conscious of having made all sorts of little feminine, coquettish advances, and she kept recalling her foolish speeches and glancing looks, with such irritation that she could almost have offered David the cup of magic poison which the forsaken Guendolen offered to King Arthur, in the Bridal of Triermain; but which the restiveness of that monarch's steed fortunately saved him from swallowing. Different fragments of her own discourse, made "to enchant his ear;" attempts to show how much she knew and had read about America; quotations from "Astoria" and "Mackenzie's Discoveries in the Fur-trade;" explanations of Scottish manners and habits; scraps of Gaelic songs; the romantic account of the breaking-up of the clans, by forbidding the wearing of the tartans; all returned to her with that keen and vivid sense of shame, which vain people are apt to feel at the idea of having been made ridiculous in trivial things.

True to her prevailing fault, she thought only of herself—her own share in all this. Her own mortifications, her own injuries, her own mistake; and she sat down to dinner with every disposition to be as bitter as Lady Macfarren or Tib.

David Stuart saw the cloud on the lovely brow, and guessed her mood.

"It is a great relief to me, duchess," said he, as he drank wine with her, "that this is over, and that you and the duke have behaved so generously. I assure you I have long felt the hor-

den of my pretense to be greater than I could bear; and I dare not say how often I have been on the point of betraying myself, when those beautiful eyes seemed to be seriously and attentively considering how they could explain something to me. I felt so utterly ridiculous—something worse, perhaps, than ridiculous; I can only hope that you will think of it all with indulgence."

The duchess relaxed a little from her moodiness, and smiled. He had behaved very ill, but he had called her eyes beautiful, and he had affirmed that *he* felt ridiculous. That lifted the ridicule off her, at least a considerable portion of it. After all, there had been something *infra dig.* in being on such easy terms of acquaintance with a fur-merchant and an accountant. She was not sorry that he turned out to be a gentleman by birth and education; and his being Mr. Stuart, instead of Mr. Lindsay, did not the least alter the possibility of his admiring her.

The vain little sylph was by no means hard or ill-natured; so, as soon as she had left off considering herself and her own share in these adventures (which was not till she had thought of herself in every possible light, and replaced herself as advantageously as possible in her own opinion), as soon as she began to think of other people at all, she thought of them kindly. Her countenance cleared, and she smiled often and gently at Eleanor, who sat nearly opposite; for she could not but pity her. It was dreadful what she must have endured at the time of the supposed suicide, and how glad she must have been when she knew he lived and saw him again. And now the duchess knew the secret; she could remember much in Eleanor's manner of late, that was feverish, and suffering, and constrained; which proved that, instead of enjoying the mystery, it had been a great trial and embarrassment to her. That of itself was a *circonstance atténuante;* it showed that she had not been triumphing in the deception practiced on the duchess, and on every one else.

Her Grace was mollified. She could not, however, smile so kindly at Margaret, because she thought it was so affected of her to sob, as she did, when she first recognized Mr. Stuart; and so affected, to sit now quite silent, and pale (for her who generally had far too much color), contemplating David, as if he were a new picture she had bought and brought home. But even this melted away: first under the reflection that if the mysterious fur-merchant wished to remain incognito, he must be extremely provoked with Margaret; and she rather liked the idea of any body being provoked with Margaret: and, secondly, a further thaw took place on more amiable grounds, when the duke, laying his hand gently on her arm as she passed from the dining-room, said fondly:

"You can't think how pretty and how glad you looked as I caught glimpses of you behind the épergne; it is so dear of you, feeling so much for these poor souls, after being bored all the way home by that desperate Lady Macfarren and her companion. It covers Margaret's indiscretion so kindly: you can't think how obliged to you I feel."

The duchess loved her husband, and she also *loved to* be praised by him, which in spite of *his partial indulgence,* as he was of a frank, blunt nature, did not occur with quite sufficient frequency to satisfy her. She was conscious that the drive with Tib and Danaë, so far from boring her, had interested her precisely in the way the duke would least have approved, since those ladies had croaked a sort of Chough and Crow duet of information of all they thought, knew, or suspected of Eleanor's encouragement of Stuart, with a running commentary of bitterness. She was conscious that it had never occurred to her to desire to cover Margaret's indiscretion, and she was touched by her husband saying, he was obliged to her, and by the look of trust and fondness with which the words were accompanied. For the thousandth time she made one of her feeble little vows against coquetry. For the thousandth time she felt—incorrigible as she was—the superiority of this man without beauty, without what is called charm, with only his frank, high soul and singleness of heart, as grappling-irons in the shifting anchorage of her love—over all those to whom she had from time to time accorded a momentary and wavering preference. For the thousandth time she acknowledged with a secret sigh, the worth of his regard, the value of his approbation, and shame at not being more deserving of both. She felt a wish almost to ask pardon of Margaret for her hard thoughts; especially after the latter produced a quantity of beautiful coral ornaments which she had brought with her from Naples for her spoiled little sister-in-law, and which she had been at the pains to have dived for a second time from the depths of a packing-case, in order to oppose that small diversion to the cloud of anxiety and embarrassment that hung over them.

The evening passed off better than could have been expected. David Stuart, no longer checked at every turn of the conversation, by the necessities of his assumed disguise, talked of Naples and its memories with Lady Margaret. He gave an animated and interesting description of the coral fisheries; the picturesque scenes at which he had been present among the fishermen; and the laws by which even that wild trade is protected, making it penal to break the coral away under a period of ten years, that time may be allowed for the branches to re-form or be renewed. They talked of ornaments in general; of the thirst for them which existed from the earliest times, among savage and civilized nations. Of diamonds, and pearls, and feathers, and shells, the garland of the Sybarite, the laurel wreaths of the hero. Of the decorations of death in all countries, from the coronal of flowers round the waxen brow of a dead body, and the lilies scattered over a maiden's hearse, to the articles of thin beaten gold found in Etruscan tombs, which there is no doubt were a species of ornament made for that single purpose—tomb jewelry; worked and sold to adorn unconscious corpses; and the stealing of which formed the occupation of a peculiar banditti, robbers of death; tomb-breakers; whose adventures were woven into fiction in ancient times. They talked of the workers of these ornaments, and those of modern days—of the strange chance that binds certain classes of human beings to pass their lives in searching for or executing luxurious ornaments, which other classes are to hang about their bodies, or to fasten to their raiment. Of the temptations and

hardships of the poor mechanic, and the dark sad lives, of which we know little more than of the mines from which the wrought gold was first taken. Of seals, and intaglios, and sculptured gems; of old Sicilian or Pompeiian fancies, long lost or buried, now priceless. And the pretty duchess listened, trying on all her bracelets on one arm, and hanging chains of coral and gold round Eleanor's passive throat, uttering exclamations of pleasure like a child, or pausing with some carved treasure in her hand, to give more earnest attention to some peculiarly curious fact or interesting anecdote. And she said Mr. Lindsay (she begged pardon, Mr. Stuart) had never been so agreeable, and that she was *so* glad Margaret was arrived, and *so* pleased with the coral she had brought, and that really it was the most delightful day she had ever spent, and she should long remember it. And on showing some of the ornaments to Tib, in the joy of her heart, she received only the discouragement of a snorting laugh, and the observation that it was a pity Leddy Margaret had not "bethought herself of a cloak to cover devices," which would have been more useful to some folks than beads: in spite of which she accepted, for her own adornment, a bull's head in coral, as a broach, and thanked Lady Margaret with tolerable grace; instantly burying it in the deep perspective hollow formed by the meeting of the folds of her dress, after they had swept over her capacious bust.

But neither ornaments, conversation, or gifts, could have won Lady Macfarren from the apparent study of the evening paper. Fiercely she glared at it, sitting apart by the fire, as though it held in its long columns the almost interminable sum total of Eleanor's offenses. Dark over all gloomed her perturbed spirit. To her came no healing balm, no modification of displeasure. She saw it all. It was a plot from first to last. She was not sure but Margaret was an accomplice: Margaret who sate there, unconscious of all suspicion, joyous and thankful, wrapped in dreams of the past, thinking how they had met, who had parted so strangely, and of the alteration in David's looks, of his wild adventures, of his penury and suffering in the far-off land, while every now and then a short sob, and a smile that shone like a rainbow through momentary tears, told how extremely discomposed her spirits still were from the events of the day.

This return at the right moment, this theatrical discovery, so well timed even to a day, during the absence of Sir Stephen (absent also when Mr. Lindsay arrived at the Castle), this upholding of David by the Lanarks against the evident justice of circumstances, all combined to swerve her fierce anger to madness. Her brother was a deceived husband; they were both mocked by this cunning girl and her base guardian, whose love for Eleanor was scarcely less evident than his scorn for those who surrounded her. Irresolution and error, struggles against temptation, good efforts mingling with evil actions, all this was infinitely less comprehensible to Danaë than cold-blooded scheming, and direct deliberate vice. Her brother had refused to give credit to her suspicion when she had warned him; now he must hear her, now he must believe. Her path seemed tangled with briars, and choked with dust, but she would break through the briars, and lay the dust with Eleanor's tears. Crush her, divorce her, disgrace her, and choose again! It seemed written in the red-hot coals she looked at with her angry eyes over the edge of the newspaper she held in her feverish hand. Choose again. Oh! how she hated Eleanor, as her memory rapidly ran over those items of offense that had accumulated since first the pale bride stood, fair and cold as a statue, in that unwelcoming home, to which she paid a compulsory visit, and which she left with such unconcealed satisfaction. Her sad, haughty reserve, that would not quarrel; that would only evade and avoid; shrink and contemn. Her want of humility at having no fortune; her extravagance, as it seemed to Danaë, under those adverse circumstances. Her having such a sickly child as Clephane, who was in fact the cause of the disaster that ended in the death of both boys. Her having no other children, so that Sir Stephen became evidently, day by day, more and more knit to the base-born, handsome lad at the Lodge, whose parentage was as well known to his sister as to his scandalized household.

Her silent scorn, and silent endurance, and indifference to life or death, till the arrival of her paramour from over the seas; the paramour she had parted from till matters could be safely settled; so that he was not in danger of the law; so that he could come without feeling a noose round his neck, and who now appeared with a long, ridiculous, romantic story of log-cabins, and self-denial, and the pretense of being another than himself.

The evening seemed endless to Lady Macfarren, till she could get away to her own room, and commune with her own fermenting heart, without the chance of being "still." The cold dawn that broke over the Highland moors, crossed the candle-light still burning in her room. Her tall, powerful figure might still have been seen, reflecting moodily, with legs crossed, and arms folded on her breast, like a man in a masquerade of female drapery. Yet woman's thoughts were coursing through her mind; before that fierce and haggard eye, passed bridal groups, vague pictures, shutting out Eleanor forever, and appointing in her stead a wife who should be a mother and a glad companion, who should have power to send Bridget Owen and her striplings back to wander with goats among the Welsh mountains, and bring heirs again to Castle Penrhyn in the direct line.

Crush her—divorce her—disgrace her! It was written in the gray of the dawning sky, as it had been written on the red-hot coals, the night before.

Till at length, rising and wrapping herself, like a mountaineer on the open heather, in the folds of a shepherd's plaid, the chilled and benumbed giantess stalked to bed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Good heavens! This is very shocking: have you read this, Mr. Stuart? Surely it concerns you nearly. Is not Stuart of Logie your cousin?" said the Duke of Lanark, next morning at breakfast.

"Yes, he is my cousin. I never saw him that I can recollect. My father and his were on bad terms."

He had been killed driving home from the hunt. The dog-cart upset, and pitched him on his head, and he never spoke afterward.

"Are you not his heir? How strangely things turn out! This alone would have made it necessary for you to avow yourself. You will have to claim the property. It is all entailed, is it not?"

"Yes, it is all strictly entailed. It is not a very large property; but it should be riches for a man who has nothing. Poor fellow! he could not be more than two-and-twenty! What a fate!"

"No, just two-and-twenty: he came of age, I recollect, when we were last in Scotland. Well, it is a shocking way of attaining good luck; but it *is* good luck, Stuart, and I can but congratulate you."

"Now you will not leave Scotland," said Eleanor, with a smile. "Now you will know where home is, and not make dispirited speeches to me any more."

Her manner had something of the old freedom of tenderness in it; her allusion to his words the morning they walked to the hill-preaching, while they were looking at Dunleath in the distance: "My home is not here. God knows where it is!" thrilled through his heart. He had a home now—a home! His eyes fixed themselves wistfully, dreamingly, on her face. He sighed and averted them without answering. The duke again addressed him:

"You will be going over to Logie, I suppose? no one knows of your arrival here. Would it not be better to send to Malcolm, and let him get through that declaration as a matter of business; he is only at Carrick. We shall go to Castle Penrhyn for a couple of days, that Eleanor and Margaret may have a comfortable gossip together, and that we may all understand each other, after this little dramatic confusion; after that, I hope we shall see you for a long visit at Lanark's Lodge. I hope the misfortunes of your life are over, Stuart, and that all this is the dawn of a brighter day."

Once more the frank hand was extended, and David Stuart comprehended all the generosity that was still endeavoring to smooth his path. He remembered that Sir Stephen had yet to learn the deception that had been practiced upon him. He felt that Eleanor's return to Castle Penrhyn, alone with Lady Macfarren and Tib, to make this disclosure to her husband, would have been exceedingly comfortless. He felt that there was protection in the thought of her being accompanied by Margaret, and the duke and duchess. Who had made protection necessary? Who had created for Eleanor a false position in her own home? The friends talked it over in Margaret's dressing-room. The duke, and Margaret, and Eleanor, and the pretty duchess were all there, discoursing there of the strange chance which gave the exiled man a home and a fortune as soon as he set foot on his native soil.

"Oh! Margaret, are you not sorry Lady Peebles and Lady Macfarren were with us yesterday, *as witnesses*?" exclaimed Eleanor.

"*Yes,*" *said the duchess,* eagerly, "for to-day he could have confessed himself to be Mr. Stuart so gracefully: quite a romance, you know; coming forward to claim the estate like a hero in disguise."

"Oh! not like a hero," said Margaret with rather a mournful smile. "I am not sorry for the disclosure; but I am sorry it was even made necessary. My dear Eleanor, how could you allow such a foolish deception? It ought never to have been. It was beneath him, and beneath you. Where was one good old devise, 'Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra,' when you consented to do the honors of your husband's house to one who was playing a part there, which you would have feared Sir Stephen's discovering?"

"David Stuart had such a morbid dread of being recognized," said Eleanor. "He was so extremely anxious about it. I could not make him see matters in the same light as I did; and he intended, I believe, to go away long since. He lingered on, and things became more difficult as he staid."

"Of course they did. Falsehood is never easy, dear Eleanor, people seize it as a shield, and it turns to a spear in their hands, to pierce the bosoms it was meant to protect. It is like one of the demon-gifts in German stories, that ruin their possessors."

"Margaret, I do not defend it. I have passed a very painful time; but I believe women are incompetent judges of the degree of disgrace attached to men under such circumstances, as those my poor guardian involved himself in. I know he spoke of it as irretrievable. Do you think he was so very wrong for assuming a false name?" and she turned to the duke. He smiled kindly, and paused (for he could not be said to hesitate), before he replied.

"If ever I could think my peerless Margaret at fault, in her notions of right and wrong," said he, "it certainly would not be on this occasion I think Stuart erred in what he did. I have admitted as much to him. I feel for him; I comprehend his excuses; but the conduct is faulty, which needs an excuse. Not even the look of your appealing eyes, shall make me say I think him right to have practiced this deception Either he should have had strength to forego the great delight (and a great delight I admit it to be—a temptation hard to be withstood) of seeing you again, of standing in your presence, whom he had wronged and yet loved, a forgiven man—or, my dear Eleanor, he should have had strength to brave the shame his former rashness had incurred, and come over here as Mr. Stuart in his own name and character. Strength to abstain, or strength to endure—either way, strength. Moral courage, without which honor can not stand the brunt of life's trials."

Again the duchess felt, as her beautiful eyes rested on her husband, how real was his superiority. The image of the false Quebec merchant, the Lindsay of Castle Penrhyn, the guardian of Eleanor's childhood, the hero in disguise who was to take possession of Logie, rose with all his advantages before her imagination; graceful, kindly, animated as he had been the evening before, making, with Margaret, that pleasant and yet learned discourse, which she never could see her coral ornaments without recollecting—talking as no one else could talk, and handsomer than any man she knew, and yet lifted from his

pedestal in her fancy, by that sentence from her husband's lips. She felt the difference; the duke had none of those advantages, but in one respect he stood nearer the angelic nature, that in him there was "no shadow of turning."

Not so to Eleanor! Warped by the blind, unconscious idolatry of her heart, she still thought with tender pity, of that one false step, taken, as it seemed to her, because he felt his position more bitterly and keenly, than others thought he ought to feel. She would not judge him. She shut the eyes of her soul, while the shade of his faults passed by. She had so seldom wanted protection, so often needed comfort, that tenderness seemed to her the first quality upon earth: and as for that heroism that was required of him, it might be possible, it might be impossible, she would not question it. Let those practice it who could. His whole story was so strange and dreadful, that his conduct could not be judged by common rules. Poor Eleanor!

While they talked in Margaret's dressing-room, David Stuart reflected in his own. Reflected on the strange chances which detained him in Scotland, which made his stay there possible and natural. There was a long agitated interval when he endeavored in spite of those favorable chances, to resolve to leave it. To let Logie, which had thus providentially fallen to him, at all events, for a series of years: to go far, as far as possible from Eleanor and her home: to nerve his soul to the lonely fate to which his own misconduct had condemned him. He endeavored to resolve that he would leave that room simply to make a sort of farewell explanation with the frank-hearted duke, and to state his determination to go abroad, till years should have changed much in the opinion of others, much in his own heart. He endeavored to resolve.

Resolve! Oh! willow branch dipping in the stream, and wavering to the ripple of circumstance, and the impulse of the breeze!

He looked out on the noble view that lay before his window, and his thoughts flew in rapid succession from Lanark's Lodge to Dunleath, Logie, and Castle Penrhyn. He saw the garden there, and Eleanor! visionary Eleanor; real at any moment while he staid in Scotland, he had but to turn the handle of the door now, and descend the stair, and quench the thirst of his soul by seeing her. How should he quench that thirst, away in the distant lands, pining in vain for the music of her voice, the touch of her gentle hand? How should he bear that silent, loveless life, which his soul had escaped from as from a dreary prison, coming once more to light and warmth and the perfume of summer flowers? Life—and no Eleanor! Was it life? was it worth taking, or bearing? The very imagination of it brought the cold dew on his forehead, and a shudder through his frame. He turns hurriedly to leave the room, he must see her now—now this moment—he must feel that all is real and possible, of constant communion and companionship. He can not even make the preparation for that two day's journey to Logie till he has calmed the cowardice of his heart, that fears to lose her. He seeks her; he must speak with her. Leave Scotland! Sooner lie down and die on the heather; sooner beg his bread in a hooting crowd, all pointing at him, and mocking him, as he used to see them long ago, in evil-haunting dreams. There is but one idea on earth—Eleanor! Let him see her; let him be sure of that; and for the rest—come what come may!

They talk, in Margaret's dressing-room, of strength to endure; of strength to abstain; but he does not hear them. They talk, in Margaret's dressing-room, of moral courage, without which honor can not stand the brunt of life's trials; but their conversation does not reach David Stuart.

Yet he has made his struggle of late. Anxious about many things, but anxious above all to prove to Eleanor that she need not fear him; that his first fault wiped away, no second shall prevent him standing before her redeemed and upright, the ideal of her youth. The flesh has sunk on his hollow cheek; the lustre of his strange, spiritual eye is bright, like one in a consumption. Eleanor watches him; she thinks he looks miserably ill, and Margaret says he has altered greatly in these eight anxious years. She has not altered: bright Margaret remains the same: no one would guess eight years had passed, who looked only upon her. Does it sound a long time to some of my younger readers? Let them look round and see how quickly such a term can pass; but not to all alike. To some those years seem scarcely to make a full stop in the page of life. To others the space includes the volume of their destiny. With Lady Margaret there was no change; the hours

"Stole from the dial, and no pace perceived."

her eye was as bright, her hair as glossy, her step as light, her laugh as cheerful, her song as clear and sweet as when she came to undertake the duties of chaperon to Eleanor, at Aspendale. Her brother and sister-in-law welcomed her as in those days; her aged grandmother the same; nor in their lives either had there been any event. Nothing marked the years, unless that pretty little Euphemia was growing tall and slight, instead of round and rosy.

But oh! how different was all with Eleanor! Into those eight years had been crowded all that could make or mar her fate. The supposed suicide of her guardian; her marriage; the birth and death of her twin sons; the death of her mother; the knowledge of Bridget Owen's position in her home; the return of David Stuart, and now the avowal of his real name; all had succeeded each other swiftly and darkly like events in a dream.

Now she was to meet her husband after an avowed falsehood. That was a thought of pain; but it was mixed with much happiness; for had not David's lot cleared to comparative sunshine? The duke had undertaken to tell Sir Stephen the events which had taken place, and the departure of Stuart for Logie; but he was forestalled. The phaeton had been once more called into requisition, and Tib, at the risk of her life, had been driven back to Castle Penrhyn, by the fierce female charioteer of yesterday; curbed, for the first time, in her spiteful sayings by dread of the sudden lash which Danaë applied to the flanks of the horses, whenever some forcible phrase of condemnation was used.

Tib went to tell her Airle the astounding news, and Lady Macfarren sought her brother.

As before, she found a difficulty in persuading him that Eleanor could be unfaithful to him. He even took it as a personal insult, and, with an oath, asked her if she thought it likely a woman who was married to him, "was to take up with every lath-and-plaster fellow that crossed her path?" But he was shaken. The proof that Eleanor had acquiesced in the deception practiced with respect to David Stuart's assumed name, did what such proofs do in all cases; the boundary of trust was broken down.

Sir Stephen shook with fury, with such fury, that even his sister felt alarmed, and inwardly congratulated herself that there would be time for her athletic brother to "cool down" before the arrival of the party from Lanark's Lodge. But she had "raised the devil she could not lay." In vain, as she withdrew, she advised the insulted husband to take steps quietly to ascertain the truth of what she had told him. Sir Stephen repeated the word "truth" with a growling curse, and a blow on the table with his clenched fist. Then he unlocked his desk, and took out Eleanor's letter to him while in Wales; her letter announcing the arrival of her quondam guardian at the Castle. It was brief: there was no difficulty in finding the sentence; it stood marked out from among the rest by the hesitating erasures which had been made. After stating the circumstances of Mr. Fordyce's providential interference and prevention of David's self-slaughter, the meeting with Mr. Weston, and the recovery of her fortune, she wrote: "Mr. Lindsay, a gentleman from Mr. Stuart, is here, to arrange and explain—" that had been scratched through with her pen, and over it was written: "a Mr. Lindsay, from Quebec, is here as his representative;" but that again had been renounced, and the phrase at last stood: "Mr. Stuart is represented by Mr. Lindsay, from Quebec, who is here, if you should wish to see him before he goes back to Edinburgh, on his way to America."

Represented, indeed! Monstrous hypocrisy! monstrous insolence and bravery of his authority as lord and master of Eleanor and his house! All the blood in his veins beat like the stream round a mill-wheel; he could have torn David limb from limb, or rolled a great stone over him, as Polypheme did to the shepherd Acis. Represented! A fierce sneer broke from him, as he crumpled up the letter in his hand, shivering with the desire to wreak vengeance somewhere, on some one, he scarcely cared who.

As he stood thus, in solitary wrath, the door of the room opened, and Eleanor herself appeared. Eleanor looking lovely, the strings of her bonnet untied, gladness and embarrassment mingling in her countenance. She had just arrived; she came to ask him if the duke might come in and speak with him; that generous, kind friend who was to make explanations for them all. Driving through the fresh air of a Highland morning in company with the best and kindest friends she had; all talking cheerfully of David's change of prospect, of the safe future and the luckless past, had given her brightness. The halo of youth and beauty was round her, but this time her beauty did not mollify her husband. The sight of her was as the sight of colors to the bull that stands chafing alone in a Spanish arena. He rushed toward her, as she made a breathless, startled pause at the door; he seized her arm with his right hand, he grasped her shoulder with his left, and he shook her as passionate nurses shake a rebellious child. Her bonnet fell off; the long braids of her beautiful hair were loosened; a wild, short, sharp cry escaped her, and when he relaxed his grasp at the sound, she staggered to the nearest chair, and dropped into it; her eyes fixed in speechless amazement and horror on his face.

"G—d d—n you, I wonder you are not ashamed to look at me," said he, fiercely, panting with anger and excitement; "I wonder you are not afraid for your life, by God, after your conduct toward me."

"Oh!" said Eleanor, with a bitterness and desperation which did not seem to belong to her nature, and in a tone as vehement, though not as loud as his own—"I am afraid of nothing—you can only kill me!"

She closed her eyes for a moment, and Sir Stephen thought she was going to faint; but she did not, though every tinge of color forsook her face, though even her lips became marble white, and it seemed to him at last to be a ghost with pale brown hair and living eyes, speaking to him. How strangely she spoke—almost sternly; what a tone of command and suffering she took! "Listen to me," she said, and he obeyed.

"Listen to me! I guess exactly what has happened; your sister has narrated to you, in her own way, and with her own commentaries, events which you were about to learn from a more friendly tongue. In agreeing to conceal from you Mr. Stuart's real name, I did exceedingly wrong. I did that wrong out of compassion and sympathy, to soothe a morbid sense of shame, on the part of a man whom I have regarded with affection ever since I was an orphan child, fatherless and helpless. I did not see how it could grieve or injure any living creature, that he should save himself the shame he dreaded, by continuing to bear in my house the name he has always borne in America. I was so glad to know that he lived, and to see him again, that I did not consider any other circumstance! I agreed to his wish at once; it did not even strike me as objectionable, till I had to write to you. Then I was distressed by the position in which I had placed myself toward you, but I could not recede." She paused, and added hurriedly, "I have nothing else to reproach myself with; you can not wring the gladness out of my heart, that he is alive and above the ills of fortune—no violence can do that. The duke wished to have seen you on the subject, which brought me here."

He listened, as she had desired him; he believed her. He felt that she was telling him the exact truth. His anger shifted away from her to David Stuart—shifted from her, and, as she moved, he hastily assisted her to rise.

"Well," he said, "I'm sorry I was rough with you; it is a d—d business altogether, and you must allow that a fellow must be cursed cool to take that sort of thing quietly; kiss me, and let us be friends." But the same short, sharp cry broke from Eleanor, that had startled him before.

"Oh! let me go," said she with a shudder, "I am in such pain!"

"Why, what the devil ails you?—are you

hurt?—did I hurt you?—have I sprained your arm? Such cursed folly—coming in here," muttered he, "braving a fellow, after what I'd just heard."

"I did not know you had heard it," said Eleanor, faintly. "Help me away—I think my arm is broken, not sprained."

"Broken! oh, d—n it, Eleanor, nonsense! Move it—let me touch it."

He passed his finger down the limb that hung at her side. It was broken; there could be no doubt about that: women's bones are little, and Eleanor, though not a sylph like the little duchess, was slightly and delicately formed. Her arm could not stand the grasp which might have proved innocuous to Lady Macfarren; it was certainly fractured. Sir Stephen felt very sick.

He went to the chimney-piece and rang the bell violently.

"Ride for Dr. McNab," said he; "go the nearest way, over the hills, and d—n you, ride hard, and have him here without delay. Tell him Lady Penrhyn has broken her arm."

As the servant closed the door, he again approached his wife.

"I did not intend to hurt you," said he, gloomily; "you must know, of course, Eleanor, that I did not break your arm on purpose."

But Eleanor seemed transformed. She answered, in a tone of wild impatience,

"Oh! what does it signify? Pray do not let us speak of it. When all's done, it's only a little agony more or less. What is a broken arm? I've seen children bear more than that patiently; I would not care if it were death."

And once more closing her eyes, she murmured to herself the word "Death!" and then these lines from Watts:

> "The past temptations
> No more shall vex us: every grief we feel
> Shortens the destined number: every pulse
> Beats a sharp moment of our pain away—
> And the last stroke must come!"

Sir Stephen stared at her with amazement—with a sort of fear. Was she delirious? What change had come over her? At all events, she would be better in her own room.

"Shall I call Lady Margaret?" said he, "or shall I help you up-stairs?"

"I think I can walk now; I do not feel so faint. Will you tell Margaret to come to my room? Say to them," added she, after a pause, "that I slipped on the steps leading to the reading-room; it will account for this accident."

CHAPTER XLIV.

You can only kill me! Was it Eleanor who had spoken these desperate words? Was it Eleanor whose voice echoed in his ear, alternately in tones of command, and of anguished defiance, or was it all a strange dream?

The first time the voice we love speaks to us in the low tone of tenderness is an epoch in our lives; so is the first time we hear it in accents of anger. The very sound of our own Christian name first uttered by certain lips, remains with us as a distinct memory; for the voice is the soul's interpreter upon earth; we employ it, but we can not govern it; at times we dare not trust it. It trembles with our anger—it falters with our love—it moans the reproach we will not put into words—it betrays the fear we struggle to deny. When we have done with life and our fellow-creatures, our first exile from them is silence. Silence, before decay. The voice is gone that we knew so well—that answered us so often. It shall answer no more. No more! Though the world seem one great void in whose centre we stand to yearn and to listen!

Sir Stephen could not recover from the impression made by the tones in which Eleanor had spoken. He had been married to her eight years, and had rarely been absent from her; but he had never heard her speak as she spoke this day. It was as if some great crash had broken a sweet instrument, and jarred it into strange discord. The phrases,

"You can only kill me," "when's all's done it's only a little agony more or less," "I would not care if it were death," "you can not wring the gladness out of my heart—no violence can do that," repeated themselves in his brain, once and over again, in spite of his struggle to drive them out, in spite of glass after glass of wine at dinner, in spite of the darkness of night, and the stillness of all things, when he was alone in his own room, and Eleanor was lying in hers, the dim watch-light burning, her arm splintered and carefully set, and all the busy household in bed.

"You can only kill me!" D—n it, did he want to kill her? Did he want to do her any harm? Curses on David Stuart! ten thousand curses on him! but for him and his d—d contemptible folly, all this need not have been! Curses on women and their spite to each other: if Janet Macfarren had kept her tongue between her teeth for another two hours, he might, as Eleanor said, have heard the events which had so ruffled him, told in a more friendly manner. The duke had talked them over with him since. His frank condemnation of the line pursued, his open admission of Sir Stephen's right to be offended as a husband and host, where so strange a deception was carried on, did more toward pacifying and conciliating him, than hours of apologetic discourse. Had he but heard the duke before he saw his fierce sister, Eleanor might not now be lying with a broken arm; nor he sleepless and feverish.

For he could not rest! In vain he thrust back the hot coverings from his broad, stately chest; in vain he rose and opened one of the windows, that he might breathe more freely; in vain he tossed, and turned, and flung that strong right hand, whose grasp had proved so perilous, above his head which ached and throbbed as though the temple-veins would burst; in vain he sate up and stared around him, burying his fingers in the thick masses of his tangled hair, and wondering what ailed him, and whither the common blessing of sleep had fled. The night seemed interminable; there was something hellish in its fever and its darkness; in the wind that flapped the heavy window-curtain, and swept across the room, cooling nothing, only making the shadows cast by the flickering lamp, wave unsteadily on the pale wainscoting of the wall.

It was a new, strange torture to him, this

sleepless bed; his healthy, animal nature had no acquaintance with a suffering so well known to the habitual invalid; he felt as if possessed by demons. Hours that seemed years went by, and morning broke. He looked at the streaks of dawn from the open window, closed it, and drank a long, deep draught of water; then he flung himself on the bed, and slept.

Disturbed dreams coursed one another through his mind—he started and muttered in his sleep. His hand clenched and struck out; then he lay still for awhile, heavily slumbering; and then again he tossed and turned, muttering familiar names and broken sentences and words. He dreams of Eleanor, in a London ball-room, with a wreath round her head, flushed and weary, but beautiful—how beautiful! He waltzes with her, whirling round, breathless but happy; the music stops; they stop—what is the matter? there is an obstacle: a mound of the earth in the midst of the ball-room; they stumble—they fall; his hand rests on Eleanor's corpse; the mound is a grave; he has fallen into it. Oh! horror—wake!

He dreams again. He is among the Welsh hills; it is winter; he sees a young, slight girl, almost a child, standing in the snow, poorly and simply clothed; yet she can not be a peasant? No, the Welsh curate's grand-daughter. The old man is there too, with a quaint peaceful face, lit by a foolish, flattered smile at the honor done him by Sir Stephen's visit, dressed in an odd costume, something between a gardener and a parson. The dream shifts; Sir Stephen sees a little church, where the quaint man preaches sermons in Welsh, and little fragments of learning come out in his preaching like sparks in the darkness. His grand-daughter is not listening; she is looking at the rays of winter sunshine, on the holly in the window; she is thinking of a love-meeting she will hold as she goes home. The dream shifts again. The young girl is gone; the old man with the quaint, peaceful face is alone; he hunts for footsteps he can not find in the snow; he looks down into the well, holding a light there with a trembling hand. His grandchild had been carried off. He goes back into his cottage, and sits down, groaning, on the old seat by the hearth; the other seat opposite is empty—empty forevermore! He preaches brief, wandering, foolish discourses; his scanty flock look at him with pity; they think of him, not of what he says; they watch him sadly, as he turns down the path that leads to his lonely home.

The dream is gone; another rises in its stead. The strong swimmer is in the lake at Glencarrick; he swims for life and death; the little child is on his back, wet and bewildered; he feels the touch of its small, soft, frightened lips pressed coaxingly on his neck, on his shoulder; he hears its terrified cry over the waters: "Clephane! my darling Clephane!" he sees Clephane sinking—sinking among reeds and a tangled network of weeds. He sinks himself; help! Frederick is drowning—help! He wakes; this is a nightmare—this is illness. Oh, how glad he is to wake and shake off the great anxious *horror, and sit upright, and see the sun rising beyond the hills, shining down on the solid earth! He rings for his servant.* Is Dr. McNab up yet? *Has he seen Lady* Penrhyn? When he has attended to her, let him come to Sir Stephen he wishes to be blooded in the arm. And so th fever is drained away, and the vague thirst o vengeance is quenched, and the haunting dream are banished, and the sense of coolness return and let who will lie awake again to-night, S Stephen slumbers sound, and wakes refreshed, a he has done hitherto all his life. Only in the morn ing, when he goes down to the Lodge to tak young Owen out with him, he asks Bridget i she has heard lately from her grandfather; an says he does not see why the boy should not g to Wales for a couple of months to stay with th old man, and cheer him.

But Bridget shakes her head. She knows i would not cheer the weak, but pious old man, t see that sturdy, handsome child of shame. An Sir Stephen tells her of his restless night, and hi heavy dreams, and how he would not pass such another for a king's ransom. And Bridget sighs, and wonders less at the horror of his visions than at their rarity, and owns that to her such dreams have often come, especially in the first year she spent at the Lodge. Vexing her soul with memories of innocent days, and of that quaint, kind old man, who still preached disheartened, sorrowful sermons, in the little church far away among the Welsh hills where she was born.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE DAGON IS PUT "EN PENITENCE."

ELEANOR's arm had long been well, and she smiles at Lord Peebles' often-repeated joke, that his cousin Stephen has a woman-trap constructed near the door of his library, for pretty ladies to fall into; and that he would have a woman-trap, too, but thinks it a cruel way of catching them, as it breaks their bones. And he ventures on a joke against his own gorgeous and obese Tabitha, observing, that he feared if *she* had fallen into a trap, it would have required "all the king's horses, and all the king's men" to pull her out and set her up again, like Humpty Dumpty. And Tib is wrathful and astonished at the venturesome jest, and she resolves to punish the little Dagon, even in her pride of place which she does in a variety of ways. She will not break the yolk of an egg into his tea, and stir it round with a spoonful of brandy, as she generally does, to make it nourishing; she says she is hurried to get her breakfast over and go out, and bids the butler do it; and the butler can not separate the yolk as skillful Tib does but lets some of the white of the egg fall into the tea, and is not exact about the quantity of brandy, and the poor little Dagon looks plaintively about him, for he thinks the tea nasty, and the congealed white of the egg disgusts him, and he is not happy till Eleanor, perceiving his plaintiveness, sets down her own cup, and pours all the ill-made tea away, and breaks an egg and dextrously as if she had been married to a fee ble Dagon all her life, and measures the spoonful of brandy so steadily in her pretty white hand, that it is a pleasure to see her; and goes round herself, and sets it before him, with a smile and a kind word, and goes back to her place, leaving a waft of scent from the violet she wears in her bosom, and the dried lavend

in which her handkerchiefs and collars are kept, and the long silken plaits of hair that touched his little bald pate, as she stooped over him to put the cup on the table. And the Dagon is happy, and eats his breakfast merrily, and does not see the furious face of Tib, stopping, with her mouth full of toast and butter, to stare at Eleanor with amazement, and holding her food all in one cheek like a baboon, and he does not know that he is to be punished. But he is uncomfortable after breakfast, when he is reading the newspaper; for there are so many draughts of air, he can't imagine where they all come from, and nobody thinks of shutting the doors, or drawing the great, heavy Indian screen comfortably round him, or seeing that the windows really *are* all closed, for Eleanor is not there, and Tib is gone out; and, at last, the poor Dagon rings the bell, and tries to make the servant understand what to do; and the servant obeys orders, and moves about the things, but it does not answer, and as the Dagon gets impatient, the servant also gets impatient, and reflects that he belongs to Sir Stephen Penrhyn's establishment, and is not bound to waste his morning attending upon a little fidgety old lord, who is at the Castle on a visit, and whose title will one day belong to his master; so he leaves off shifting the Indian screen, and sweeps up the bright polished grate, and puts a quantity of coals on, that he may not have to return to the library for a long time, making it all very cold and uncomfortable; and then he goes away, shutting the door very loud, which Lord Peebles can not bear, and sending a great sudden sweep of wind over him, so that he puts the warm newspaper over his ear, for fear of getting the ear-ache.

In the middle of the day he is happier; for Eleanor asks him if he would like a turn in the garden, and she takes him out with her, and he ventures to tell her that he has taken cold in his ear, and she takes him then into the green-houses, and in the sunny part of the terrace, and so home; and Lord Peebles is amused with his walk, and thinks Eleanor very pretty, and loves to see her draw her little white hand out of her garden-glove, to nip off a dead leaf, or hold a flower up and admire it; and he wishes he had married early, and had had a daughter, and that the daughter had been like Eleanor.

But at dinner-time he is very wretched, for Tib keeps interfering with all he wants to eat, telling him that she will not have him eat this, and that she "shall have him laid up again" if he eats that; insomuch, that at last he does not know what to do, or what she expects, or whether he is to have any dinner at all; and he drops his hands hopelessly in his lap, and turns his big signet-ring round and round his finger, utterly discouraged; till Tib sends him the breast of a roast-fowl, which he does not like, for he is fond of little made-dishes, with sauces to them; and the fowl he thinks dry and unpalatable, it tastes as if he were gnawing the end of his own muslin cravat. And after the fowl, he is only allowed a bit of uninteresting pudding, and he feels ill and irritated, and dislikes his unenjoyable dinner. Then, in the evening, Tib will not play at patience with him, though Margaret is gone to sit with Eleanor who has retired early, not being well; and the duke is busy with plans for his water-mills, and Sir Stephen has taken Mr. Malcolm to the smoking-room to have a cigar, and there is nobody to amuse him. And he tries to read an account of the Inverness Hunt, in the "Caledonian Mercury," but the lights hurt his eyes, and he doesn't know how to manage those nice little green shades that Tib puts on and lowers as the candle burns down; and he daren't ask Tib, for she "gruff'd" him when he asked her to play at patience, and he has made out somehow that she is angry with him, though he does not exactly know why. So he sits and looks at the fire, and at the bows in his own shoes, and he feels quite obliged to Ruellach for sauntering up from the other fireplace at the end of the library, and putting his long, gray nose over the Dagon's neat little knees to be patted and spoke to; and he amuses himself lifting the rough, wiry hair of Ruellach's shaggy eyebrows, and thinking what a kindly expression there always is in a dog's eyes. And then he thinks of Tib's eyes, and he is sorry he married Tib, for she is much less kind to him now than she was before they were united. And he goes to bed, a miserable little Dagon, with symptoms of flying gout, and a bad pain in his ear.

And in the morning the poor Dagon is really unwell, for he requires a great deal of care, and the Dagoness is frightened, for though it was her sovereign will and pleasure to torment and punish her Dagon, it would not do at all to have him really ill, and, perhaps, die, and she be reduced to comparative insignificance, and Eleanor be Countess of Peebles, and mistress of Peebles Park, and Tib only queen of old maids. So she redoubles her care and attention; and she sits all that day, and the next, and the next after that, with the Dagon, in his own room; and she rubs his ear with sweet-oil, laudanum, and spirits-of-camphor; and binds his head round with spun Shetland flannel, and a soft silk handkerchief; and she consults with Dr. McNab about his gout, like the tenderest of wives; and Dr. McNab and Mr. Malcolm are lost in admiration of Tib, whom they pronounce to be "just the most comfortable body about a sick person that the heart o' man could desire;" and the Dagon revokes and reverses the sentiments that had floated through his rebellious mind while he was patting Ruellach the night before, and he is glad that he married Tib; for nobody ever nursed him as well as she contrives to do; and he feels thankful to Tib, and fond of her, and very happy again; though his foot is hot and throbbing with gout, and his ear is deaf and aching. And he does not know that yesterday was a day of purposely-prepared rack and thumb-screw, whereby he was justly tortured for his guilt in jesting about Tib's avoirdupois-weight; but he knows how he missed her all day, and how essential she is to his very existence. And he quite falls into Tib's view of the cause of his illness, which she attributes to wandering in and out of the green-houses with Eleanor, undergoing sudden changes of temperature, by being first in the open air, and then in those warm, glazed galleries; and he thanks Tib for pointing out the folly of such proceedings, and promises to be more careful in future. And Tib rises out of that little domestic struggle, covered with glory, and crowned with respect; her price so infinitely beyond rubies, that invaluable is the

only term that can be applied to her; and, accordingly, Dr. McNab, Mr. Malcolm, and the poor little suffering, feverish Dagon himself, unanimously agree that she is invaluable, and the slight rustle of her voluminous silk-gown, as she moves across the room to fetch the bottle of colchicum, with the soft, slow, heavy tread of the elephant, is music to her Dagon's ears. For people are too apt to think, especially young folks, and those that be simple, that there are no well-assorted unions in this pairing world, but what are termed love-matches; whereas there be pomp-matches, and gout-matches, and all sorts of matches, that serve to light the torch of Hymen; for the torch of Hymen (heaven bless him! as loyal persons say of a throned monarch) sometimes burns with a very lambent flame.

Eleanor Penrhyn's idea of happiness was a love-match, such as she had thought to make, in her girlish days, with her guardian, Mr. David Stuart; but Lord Peebles' idea of happiness was a gout-match, and he had realized his idea of happiness, which Eleanor had not, for she had a husband who swore at her, and kept a mistress, and broke her arm. Therefore, by the induction of success (which is the world's great test and touchstone), Lord Peebles made the wiser choice of the two.

But Eleanor still believed in the dream of her youth: that world which was to teach her worldly wisdom:

"Had taught her nothing, where she erred, she erra."

Still, she believed that poverty would have been light with a companion she could have loved, and that she could have given him joyous welcome at the threshold of a humble home. Still she looked back to the days when all this was possible; looked back—because she dared not look forward.

She thought of Logie now, as she had thought of Dunleath—it was not lovely, like Dunleath, but the waste and stretch of its purple moors, its treeless hills, with gray solemns tones scattered over their sides, its little black tarns, where no boats lay as on the blue lake at Glencarrick, were all surrounded, for her, with a halo of sacred light. There was paradise—for there was David Stuart! And at the gate of that barren paradise, stood Duty, like the angel with the flaming sword.

She did not see him often, for Sir Stephen's manner, since the day of the discovery of his real name, had been sullen, fierce, and uncourteous, in spite of the duke's friendly explanations; and David himself held aloof for Eleanor's sake. But what she did see of him was happiness; what she did see of him was clothed with the poet's blessing:

"Benedetto sia'l giorno, e'l mese e l' anno,
E la stagione, e'l tempo, e l' ora, e'l punto,
E'l bel paese, e'l loco."

What she did see of him made her hope to live, and fear to die; in spite of the wild, despairing speech, wrung from her by bodily and mental pain, the day she said to her husband, "You can only kill me!"

The little bower-room was again the scene of constant occupation; she drew, she wrote, she planned; and when he came, they talked over all she was interested in, for happy hours. *When he came!* Eleanor was conscious that she *had begun to divide time* into the days that she saw the guardian of her youth, and the blank intervals between those days. And David Stuart was conscious that his division of time exactly corresponded with this method.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A CRISIS.

The company were all gone: bright Margaret and the pretty duchess, the friendly duke, the Dagon, and his lofty Dagoness. There was no one left but Lady Macfarren and Mr. Malcolm; and now and then Mr. Stuart came over from Logie.

Sometimes when David came, Eleanor and he rode together. Sometimes, but rarely, he remained for a night at the Castle. If Sir Stephen was in a good humor, or was dull and wanted a companion; wanted stories of the backwood Indians, and moose huntings, and wild adventures, he would ask him to stay. And now and then, the snowy weather without, or the fever that burned within—the physical impossibility of setting forth without causing all the household to wonder at the foolhardiness of the guest, and the inhospitality of the host—or the moral impossibility of resisting the temptation of seeing Eleanor a few hours more, of hearing her voice say good-night, and good-morrow, made David willing to stay. But for the most part, he shrunk from it: shrunk from the invitation of the man he had grown to loathe (though he knew nothing of Bridget Owen, or the real history of the broken arm): shrunk from the shelter of the roof where he never slept, where he only watched the stars out, as they faded over the opposite tower that held Eleanor's room!

And Eleanor never pressed him to stay. To her, too, it was repugnant that her husband should offer him a sullen hospitality; to her, too, the knowledge that he was resting under the same roof, brought only a vague and feverish discomfort. She thought of the first happy day and evening when he had returned from America, and she had welcomed him with her whole heart and soul, with the frankest trust, with unbounded joy: how she woke, the morning after that blessed meeting, her eyes still beaming with happy tears, and smiled to think they were together again; to meet at breakfast as at Aspendale; to sleep and wake in one home! It was no joy now! Her thoughts did not rest with him now, as though earth's boundary were the circle round the house which harbored him. They roamed away from Eleanor's home to his. To the unseen chambers of the hut at Logie—where he read, and thought, and slept, and woke, and lived—alone! To that simple Highland shooting lodge, which Eleanor would rather have called home, than the proudest palace that ever was built: which could not be her home: which she might live to see some other happier creature than herself—some one free to make a choice, and beg Heaven's blessing on it—call home, and dwell in unmolested! Oh! would any one ever love him half as well as she had done? Would he love some one else? And the shudder of a vain vague jealousy came over Eleanor's heart, as she, too, sat and watched the stars. Those serene worlds, to whose abiding light the

eyes of millions of generations have been lifted in fever, sickness, and pain—in love and the passion of prayer—and which yet shine on, changeless and pure, as when shepherds beheld the new glory among them which told that our earth was redeemed.

Need had the world of promise of that light! Need of great mercy and help!

The struggle went on in those two hearts: in Eleanor's to bear life's pain, believing happiness impossible: in David's to bear life's pain believing happiness possible, though a sin. In which belief he erred—for we can not steal happiness; it must be Heaven's free gift, and those who would take it by storm, grasp but its counterfeit. The personal conviction of this, weighs heaviest on those who have most elements of good in them. You can not question them of their experience, for Shame and Silence stand sentinel over the past; but if they dared, and if they would, they could tell you how they seized the golden cup, and drained it, and set it down with a sigh; finding the draught bitterness—the cup of dross—the thirst for happiness still unquenched; and, lo!—heaving in the dregs—remorse and a sorrowful regret.

The golden cup glittered now on the edge of that cloud which hides the world of illusions: that cloud through which we pass as through morning mist on the mountain side, not seeing what lies beyond. And sometimes the roar of the waterfall startles us, or a precipice frowns near at hand, or we have a glimpse of some fearful abyss, and we pause and hesitate, and the pulse of our heart is quickened by fear; and then we think we may still find a track to lead us whither we desire to go, and we strike onward.

Onward!

It was a wild snowy day when David rested for the last time under the shadow of Sir Stephen Penrhyn's roof. The morning was clear and bright, and the sun shone with a rose-colored reflection on whitened hills and frozen streams and bare leaden branches, as he and Eleanor rode forth. Some of the trees had yet their raiment of leaves, for the winter storms and rain had not beat them. The wide spreading beeches in the park drive, supported on their red foliage drifts of the half melted snow; crumbling into powder when a bird lighted on the bough, or dropping gradually in soft patches to the ground. The great heavy drooping firs stretched their arms, clothed in festoons of dark green drapery, over the sheeted earth. Stillness reigned around: stillness so complete, that the sound of the horses' hoofs on the crisp snowy road, seemed muffled and unnatural, as though they had been galloping through a dumb world, where answering echoes, and moan of winds, and the song of birds, and the passage of living things were altogether unknown.

Eleanor and David rode along talking cheerily enough of his future, of changes he meant to make in the place at Logie, of visits he had been asked to pay, but which he wished to put off till the nine days' wonder of his miraculous escape and return, should have faded out of the minds of his neighbors. His inheritance of Logie was more than property to him, it was reputation; the world is an odd world, and David had never lived much in it, but he knew enough of it to know since its indulgence is always based upon accident, how favorable to him was the hazard of the die. He knew that the possessor of Logie, befriended and apparently esteemed (at all events directly countenanced) by the Duke and Duchess of Lanark, and by his own former ward, stood in a very different position from penniless David Stuart, hiding in America from the sneers and condemnation his unlucky speculations had entailed upon him. He knew how differently the same story could be told, black and miserable as the first part of that story must always be; how easily the bitterest of the blame could be shifted, from the speculating guardian who had risked Miss Raymond's fortune, to the bankrupt firm who had had the use of her money. How even the suicide which in his weakness he had contemplated, could be made to take the turn of romance, and the desperation of honor, now that it suited people not to degrade or contemn him. He felt that the load of overhanging disgrace which had seemed to him so dark, so imminent, so perpetual, to avoid the public evidence of which, he had, on his first arrival in Scotland, risked Eleanor's comfort in her own home, and dared the daily chance of detection as an impostor—was a horror which could be lifted off, like the oppression of some shocking dream. Life wore once more for him the aspect it usually wears for those who have not yet reached middle age. The terrible past had formerly swallowed up the future, but now the future preponderated over the past.

They talked then, of hopeful plans, and if, now and then, a secret sigh of bitterness woke in David's heart, or some dark thought flitted like a raven's wing across Eleanor's mind, yet the hour was a happy one. They were together. To those who have been parted, and who admit no further possibility among the blessed chances of life, than that of reunion, to be together is happiness enough.

As they rode gently along, talking eagerly; smiling at each other in that winter's sunshine, no one could have guessed how dark had been the storms of the past—nor how near was the storm of the future!

Eleanor was already speaking sentences of farewell, for they were near the Lodge gate, and she had only come "to see him on his way." They drew up their horses, and waited for some one to come down from the Lodge. The inmates seemed always to have a pleasure in the petty disrespect of making Eleanor wait. She patted her horse's neck and averted her eyes from the pretty cottage, whose adornment seemed to be the ceaseless occupation of some one of the gardeners, for even now Sandy was there lifting away the basin of a stone fountain, which the frost had cracked, and in which, during the summer time, Bridget kept gold fish to amuse her children. Young Owen was there, watching with boyish interest the proceedings of Sandy. David called out to him:

"Come down, you lazy little fellow, and open the gate, will you?"

The boy turned sharply round:

"I'm not gate-keeper!"

"Some of you keep it, I suppose," said David, impatiently.

The door of the Lodge opened, and Bridget

tossed the key to Sandy; but the old man's hands were occupied, for he had just taken up a portion of the stonework which supported the fountain. Young Owen snatched the key, and running half-way down the path, flung it into the road, exclaiming,

"Open the gate for yourself, my fine Laird o' Logie."

The key struck the forefoot of Eleanor's horse, as it stood pawing the snow, impatient of the delay, and the startled animal suddenly swerved, then reared bolt upright, reared again; and, in a moment more, would have started off, fleet as the wind, but for David's dexterity in catching the rein.

"Get down!" said he, in a choked voice, "let me help you down; my God! that your life should be endangered by such a Will-o'-the-wisp as that."

For an instant he stood looking at her, as the groom rode up, and took her horse and his own. Then, turning angrily to little Owen: "You deserve a good horse-whipping," said he, indignantly.

The lad laughed.

"Maybe you'll give it me," retorted he.

"As well I as another!" and David made an angry stride up the path, not hearing or heeding Eleanor, who, with hands clasped over her eyes, and in a smothered voice exclaimed, "Oh! don't strike him! for Heaven's sake take care what you do! I am as sure as I am of my existence that that boy—" but what she was sure of, she could not utter.

The handsome, dauntless lad stirred not an inch as David came forward to seize him; he colored violently, and lifted his bold, beautiful black eyes to the whip, which was held menacingly over his head.

"Beg pardon for frightening the lady, you mischievous imp, or I'll flog you this minute, you must be broken of such tricks as these."

"Flog away!" said the boy, trembling more with anger and defiance, as it seemed, than with fear; then, in a loud voice, "Mammy," he cried, "run down the road and meet Sir Stephen, he was coming up but now, and tell him the Laird o' Logie has hold o' me."

Bridget Owen came out of her Lodge, as a young she-panther might have rushed out of its den, as simple, as graceful, and almost as fierce, she sprang forward, flung her arms round the boy, and stood confronting David; her lovely, compassionate eyes, flashing with fury, her nostrils dilated, her short upper lip quivering over the even white teeth below, as though it had a separate life of its own. She was a perfect picture, and as David looked at her in amazement, a dim notion of some sort of link between the beauty of animal and human life, flashed through his brain; while Sandy whispered him, "Oh! sir, have a care, ye dinna ken, and—" Bridget turned and called scornfully to Eleanor, down in the road.

"How could ye let him beat my boy?" said she; "I was sorry for yours!"

But Eleanor only hid her face in her hands, and shuddered; and at the same instant, before David could move to rejoin her, the dog-cart was driven at full speed to the spot; the horse *checked with such* suddenness as to throw *him on his haunches*, and scatter the snow and earth up the bank where they stood, and Sir Stephen leaped into the road, and advanced into the centre of the agitated group.

"What the hell is all this?" shouted he "What are you at? What has happened?"

"It's the new laird wants to horsewhip me," said young Owen.

"You meddled with the boy?—you meddled with the boy?"

Sir Stephen seemed incapable of uttering another word.

"The boy flung the key at Lady Penrhyn's horse," began David.

"G—d d—n you, sir, I don't care a curse what your reasons were for meddling with him; I say he shan't be meddled with, d—n you?" and Sir Stephen looked livid with rage.

David's heart swelled with defiance, as he glanced down toward Eleanor, who was leaning against the stone work of the gate.

"If the son of your lodge-keeper—" but he was again interrupted; interrupted by Bridget.

"Oh!" said she, with wild impatience, "the boy has better blood in his veins than yours will boast—match with who you may. Speak up for your own," added she, looking toward Sir Stephen, and pressing her hands against her temples, as if the beating of their pulses made her dizzy. "Speak up for your own! I declare to the Lord, I could leave you to-morrow, though I broke my heart on the hills, if I thought you'd see him struck by any stranger of them all! This comes of our living here as we do, to be at every one's beck and bend like servants and slaves!" and the angry tears burst at last from Bridget's eyes, and quenched their hot light; her voice broke down in sobs, and with a strange but graceful gesture, she swung her hand back and pointed, without turning to the desecrated Lodge, where she thought it a degradation to dwell, but which certainly looked as little like the abode of a servant on the estate as it well could.

Her tears fell like oil on fire, in Sir Stephen's heart. He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and taking one fierce step nearer David, he said,

"G—d d—n you, sir, this boy is mine—mine!" he repeated with vehemence, glancing toward Eleanor, as if he defied even her presence in the confession; "I won't have him meddled with, either by milady, or by you, or by any other lady or gentleman; curse me if I will! If she don't like him at the Lodge, by God, I'll put him in the Castle; if she don't like him at her horse's heels, I'll put him by her side at table. G—d's blood, am I master of Castle Penrhyn, or are you? Things have gone on here in a strange way since you dropped among us, and my patience is come to a halt, sir. My house is mine—my wife is mine—and this boy is mine; we don't want you to govern us, and curse me if I wish ever to see you on this side the gate again."

He paused, and looking round, put the boy from him.

"Go in now with your mother, and come up at dinner-time to the Castle; bring your things; come for good; come to live there, do you understand? Go in, Bridget."

He stepped down into the road.

"Wish Mr. Stuart good-by, Eleanor," he said.

She held out her cold hand, and looked vaguely in his face.

"You do not seem very fit for riding; get into the dog-cart—I'll drive you home myself."

He lifted her in, touched his hat sullenly to David, and drove away.

And then old Sandy, to whom the groom had intrusted David's horse, unlocked the gate, and keeping the reins over his arm, walked through the wood by David Stuart's side; and as they walked, told him all that had been known for years at the Castle—all that Eleanor herself had known for years, but had never spoken of, respecting Bridget Owen and her children.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION.

True to the angry determination he had announced, Sir Stephen entered the dining-room with young Owen, and placed him by his side at table. He was a fearless lad, for the great glare of Janet Macfarren's eyes alarmed him no more than a bonfire on Guy Fawkes's day. No one else spoke. Mr. Malcolm looked sorrowfully at Eleanor, but she did not see him.

"Take a glass of wine with us, Malcolm," said Sir Stephen. "Take a glass of wine, Owen. We'll see who'll gainsay you, stranger or friend; take a glass of wine, and let us drink to a better store of patience in the next gentleman who horsewhips you, and the next time my lady looks on."

All dinner time, with a fierce, sneering laugh, he looked at Eleanor, and made these sort of speeches, patting the handsome, insolent boy on the shoulder, flushed with wine and triumph. And Eleanor bore it, till once, when Owen turned and smiled at his father, the gleam of likeness in his smile to little Frederick struck her again, as it had done one day at the Lodge. Her soul was shaken at the sight; the pale ghosts of her own lost children stood up between her and that offspring of her husband's sin. By some strange workings of a mother's heart, it did not embitter her more. Her dear ones were gone, and this was his, and he loved it! Her eyes softened and filled with tears; she looked kindly at the boy, who, with some embarrassment, pushed a dish of sweetmeats toward her, and shrunk back to his father's side. Eleanor sobbed aloud.

"Oh! d—n it!" said her husband, if you're going to cry, you'd better go to your own room. No crying will alter what I've determined upon, if that's what you want. I'll be master in my own house, though all the lairds in Scotland set their faces against it; d—n me if I won't. Go to your own room—you're tired; to-morrow you'll take things more coolly. D—n it, Janet, do you mean to sit here, and drink healths with the men?" added he with excessive irritation, as he saw that though Eleanor obeyed his mandate and was leaving the room, his sister sat sullenly staring at young Owen.

Lady Macfarren rose, saying,

"'Deed, then, it's the last day you'll see me at your table, to eat or to drink either, if this is the company you mean to keep at the Castle."

She followed Eleanor, and as the latter opened the door of the bower-room, and paused at its threshold, she said, with a fierce sneer,

"Ye may thank yourself for what's come to pass this day, Leddy Penrhyn; if it's a disgrace to see a man make a servants' hall of his own dining-room, it's a disgrace to see any woman, that calls herself a wife, behave as you have done to my brother—in the matter of Stuart, and in all other matters."

"Lady Macfarren!" said Eleanor, haughtily, "while I call this house my home, I will thank you to remember that this is my private sitting-room, and that I am not compelled to submit to your unauthorized intrusion, still less to your comments on my motives or actions."

She closed the door.

"Ah! my fine lady, your pride shall have a fall, or I'm not mistress of Glencarrick," thought the mailed sister-in-law, as she retreated down the corridor to her own apartment.

"While I call this house home." Was Eleanor thinking of leaving it?

Many thoughts chased each other through that miserable wife's mind, but uppermost and strongest of all, was the thought that henceforth she and her guardian were forever parted. He could never come to Castle Penrhyn more—that was impossible! She had heard her husband's words, "Gurse me if I ever wish to see you on this side the gate again." All was over! Companionship, hope, joy—all was at an end! This morning when they talked of his prospects, they foresaw no unknitting of the bond of their friendship; in that vague future of which they had spoken, they saw themselves together: not always—not more than they had been lately, but together from time to time. Now, what time would bring their meeting? Now, what event could build up the hope that lay crushed in ruin?

All of a sudden, there rushed over Eleanor's heart that wild torrent of regret, that seems, when it comes, as if the very flood-gates of passion were broken down. The waters went over her soul and whelmed it. She could not part with David Stuart; she could not live in that mockery of a home; she could not face the life of desert days before her. She was the wedded wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn, of Penrhyn Castle—she knew that; but she desired to be where David was. Yea! though it were but as an unseen spirit haunting the habitation where he dwelt; though it were only to watch him entering and departing day by day, without notice or consciousness on his part. She was in that state of mind which seems delirium to others, who are able to judge calmly—which seems delirium to ourselves, it may be, in after times. The watchword of her soul was the one breathless word, which summed the wishes of Mignon, in "Wilhelm Meister," when the feverish canker-worm of love eat into her life. Dahin!

Thither! She cared not where—or how—or what lay beyond; but thither where he was: with him—with *him!*

She looked out into the night. The snow lay over the earth in one unbroken sheet—reaching from her home to his, over the silent hills and frozen streams. The clear stars shone down from heaven over her house to his, and millions of homes besides. All was so still—so still—and Eleanor's heart and eyes so wild!

The silence was broken. Sandy came to the bower-room with a letter in his hand. She could not doubt who the letter was from. She pressed her lips to the seal before she opened it. Her cheek flushed to the deepest hectic while she read it.

'Eleanor," it said, "after what I witnessed and heard to-day, I feel that I have a right to counsel you, and that I can scarcely accuse myself of selfishness in the counsel I shall give, though my whole future will be colored by your answer.

"If there were no redress possible, for wrongs like yours, even then I think you would be justified in withdrawing from the scenes where you must have suffered so much. Oh! why did you never feel confidence enough in me to speak of this? But there is—there must be—possible redress! In England it might be otherwise: in England your husband might heap what insult he pleased upon you—might bring that Welshwoman and her brood into your very house—and, beyond the half-measure of being allowed to live separate from him, the law would do nothing for you; it would not divorce you; it would not enable you to be free forever of the man who could so mock the tie that binds you both; it would not enable you to make some other choice; to exchange oppression and insult, for protection and love. You might appeal to justice in vain.

"In Scotland this is different. By the Scotch law, the sin of the man is held as valid a reason for breaking a marriage, as the sin of the woman. By the Scotch law you could be set free at once: free as you were in those blessed days at Aspendale, when my betrayal of the trust reposed in me condemned you to this fate.

"It will be necessary to prove yours a Scotch marriage, and this will turn on legal points. You were married in Scotland, you resided there, except when your husband's parliamentary duties obliged him to be in London. He is a Scotchman. It seems to me that this is a case in which there will be no difficulty; but is one on which you will require the best legal advice, in order to know how to proceed with the least delay.

"Go to England—to London. I inclose you the address of a lawyer of eminence there, who will arrange every thing for the best, and will take the Edinburgh opinions on all that has passed. There is nothing that is not capable of the clearest proof. I can see but one termination to the struggle; if, indeed, there be any opposition to the dissolution of this most unhappy marriage—your freedom, and a happier future.

"Of that future I will not trust myself to speak. I solemnly promise, if you will let me know that you abide by my counsel this day, never to see you, never to attempt even to breathe the air of the same place where you may dwell, till you are no longer the wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn. You will write to me, and for all the guidance and support that your position in the meanwhile will require, you may trust the friend to whose legal advice I refer you.

"If your answer be 'yes,' send Sandy back, and I will make every arrangement for your journey. If no—Eleanor, I can not contemplate *any other answer*, I expect that, I wait for it.

"D. S."

"Go back to Logie," said Eleanor, in a low, trembling tone, "and tell Mr. Stuart my answre is 'yes.' You will return here, and be with me to-morrow. I will be ready by twelve o'clock."

The night was passed in preparation for a journey; a journey that was to have no return. In hurried sortings of papers and letters, and weary pickings, and sitting with clasped hands in fits of feverish thought. When Sir Stephen went out shooting in the morning, Eleanor departed. The day was bright and still, like that which had preceded it. As the carriage rolled from the door, the horse's feet beat with the same muffled sound on the snowy road that led out of the park, the gay chrysanthanums in the lodge-garden stood up in the frosty air like flowers moulded in brilliant tinted wax; not a leaf seemed to have fallen since Eleanor's eyes had rested on their stirless boughs the day before. The very snowdrifts on the palings, and on trunks of lopped trees, seemed scarcely to have altered in form. Pure, silent, and changeless was the external aspect of nature. Pure, silent, and changeless! And on such a day, in the clear winter sunshine, Eleanor saw, for the last time, the great gray stone entrance and iron gates, the decorated Lodge, and the familiar windings of the road, which had led to the threshold of her home.

The frozen stillness without, seemed but a mockery of the hot war that went on in her heart; for in that shining, voiceless hour, she left home and her husband forever! Dreaming, with feverish terror, of the law-struggles and explanations with strangers, respecting events on which she had scarcely dared commune with her own soul; dreaming, with wild visionary joy, of a future of freedom and peace, which should repay her for all she had suffered.

When Sir Stephen returned from shooting with little Owen, he opened the door of the bower-room, but Eleanor was not there. He sought her in the drawing-room, and in her own room, whistling as he went down the long corridors where his children used to run to and fro. He stopped whistling suddenly, for he thought of Frederick; and then he considered how Eleanor would receive what he was going to say. He was going to make a sort of sullen explanation, and endeavor to get her to countenance young Owen's stay at the Castle at intervals, and he would send him meanwhile to school. As he returned down the passage, Lady Macfarren met him.

"Eleanor is gone," said she.

"Gone!"

"She is gone; I do not know if she is gone alone."

"Alone! what do you mean? G—d d—n it, what do you mean?"

"You never would believe me. She is gone, and I have no doubt Stuart is gone too."

"Stuart!"

There was murder in the clenching of his hand—in the glare of his eye.

He sent one of his gillies to know if the laird of Logie was at his place. He never spoke during the hours that intervened till the man returned. They were then sitting round the fire, after their silent, sullen dinner. In spite of himself, Sir Stephen's eye had glanced perpetually to Eleanor's empty place. She had aban-

doned him and her home! Oh! even if unbeloved, it was a smiting, dreary, oppressive sensation so to lose her. The messenger returned —the laird was at his own house—it was with something of triumph, then, that Sir Stephen told his sister that she was out in her expectations as to Eleanor's guilt.

But she was gone. Where? Was it forever? Was it only to brave Sir Stephen into retracting the insult he had offered her, by bringing young Owen into his house?

Sir Stephen spoke to Mr. Malcolm; he spoke twice before he was heard, so absorbed was the gentle Tibbite, in something he had found in the newspaper.

"You shall go and make out what all this means; where Lady Penrhyn is gone, and what the h—ll she is up to. There is nothing to prevent your setting out immediately."

"I'd be just glad, Sir Stephen, to be starting this minute!"

And the lank, melancholy man rose with more energy than any one had ever seen him exhibit; as if he had only to walk to the door, and out of it, and stride over the hills in quest of Eleanor.

Some directions were given by Sir Stephen; horses were ordered, and Mr. Malcolm was off. The master of the house remained alone with his fierce sister. Her thoughts were full of renewed hopes of getting rid of Eleanor, of a new marriage for her brother; she thought of the possibility of Lady Margaret's accepting him, that blooming creature—the sister of the Duke of Lanark—the mistress of Dunleath; she thought of others, among the unmarried whom she knew. She never doubted that Stuart would join Eleanor, if he were not already gone; but she dared not say so to her brother. She dared say nothing more. She that had dared so much all her life long. She felt fiercely triumphant and hopeful; but his countenance was too terrible for conversation.

Sir Stephen looked at little Owen; he had carried his defiance of Eleanor too far in bringing him there. He would send him to school again when Eleanor returned.

When Eleanor returned!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Alone—quite alone—in London lodgings, at midnight, the table covered with letters and papers, and legal opinions, Eleanor Penrhyn sate, considering. Open, on her knee, lay a book—Ferguson's "Law of Divorce" with the leaves folded down at such cases as the lawyer who was employed for her thought fair precedents and examples of the decision that she might expect. Every thing had been done that could be done, and done with promptitude—that last and least common of lawyer virtues. Her legal adviser was to see her again in the morning, and held out the most sanguine hopes that her bitter marriage-bonds might be soon and easily broken. Meanwhile, she was to read over the papers he left, and the cases he had marked.

But Eleanor was reading nothing. Her eyes were fixed on vacancy, with a set, mournful stare; her mind full of sorrowful, repentant reflections. Old memories and haunting thoughts oppressed her; words spoken long ago returned to her, sounding, in the silence of that night, like dreary echoes. Mr. Fordyce advising her as a little child. She could not tell why the recollection of that pious, kind old man should be more present with her now than at another time. "Never do any act in life on which you dare not first ask God's blessing." She remembered his voice repeating that sentence, as if she had heard it yesterday; she had often thought of it since; she had often asked God's blessing on what she was about to do—could she ask it now? Wronged as she had been, was what she was doing, in reality, an appeal to justice, or a desperate yielding to temptation? In her secret heart, the answer was made with a shudder. One of the first questions the lawyer had asked her, was how she had made the discovery of Bridget Owen's position, and whether her leaving home followed immediately on that knowledge? No; Eleanor had known the fact some time. How long? She had known it for months—for years; she had known, or at least believed it, for five or six years; she had been certain of it for nearly two years, ever since she heard her husband talking to Bridget.

This she had admitted to the lawyer who questioned her for the case he was preparing. She could not forget the look of astonishment in his clever countenance, as she gave those hesitating answers; nor the pause he made, as if reflecting; nor the keen intelligence of his eyes, when, lifting them once more to her face, he asked: "Was Mr. Stuart equally aware with yourself of the causes of complaint you had against Sir Stephen?" nor the burning blush which accompanied her own faltering "No;" nor the momentary silence which followed, during which the lawyer did not look at her, but turned over the papers on the table, and then questioned her in quite a different tone, and on another branch of the subject, as though he were satisfied, and had given her time to recover herself.

No, it was not her husband's sin that had brought about this separation; it was the visionary sin of her own love; the desire to swear at the altar of God to be true to David Stuart till death, that prompted her to desire to break her first vow.

"Till death do us part!" how repeat those words to one man, having already taken God's name in vain as witness to their solemn binding force, when spoken to another? What was the marriage-vow, but a mockery, if the oath God witnessed could be absolved by men? if the dread sentence, "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder," were to be nothing but a form of words, and part of an unmeaning ceremony?

What if, after all the scandal, the exposure, the publishing of home miseries to the world, she should fail; and remain, after all, Sir Stephen Penrhyn's wife? But the lawyer had assured her she could not fail; that if her marriage could be proved a Scotch marriage, she was as sure of freedom as of the light of day.

What if she succeeded? What if the great holy bond, being canceled like a tradesman's deed of apprenticeship, and God's witnessing made subject to man's law, she stood free to choose again; free to abide by her early—her only choice—would it indeed be the happiness

she hoped for? Would David Stuart himself not think of her as a sinful creature, whose wild love overbore all the influences of religion, all the boundaries of duty? Would *his* love stand the test? She remembered how passionately enamored of her, her husband had seemed to be, and how soon that love vanished, leaving the dregs of a fitful admiration, which made her almost loathe her own beauty, as the only attraction she possessed for him. What, if all men's love vanished so, is the security of wedded life? She knew David Stuart's heart was cast in a gentler mould; she knew she was sure of his pity, of his tenderness; that he never could maltreat her; but his love—real love—the only love that was worth inspiring—the only love that could endure—the love wherein all things are pure, all things are holy—for which Heaven's blessing could be asked, and Heaven's blessing granted—would that be hers? would he—*could* he give her that under the circumstances?

In the early, girlish days, he had not thought of her; not, at least, with love; not as a bride; not as the inseparable companion of the onward years: it was she who had loved him. She went beyond him then: what if she went beyond him now? what if his love now were but a feverish compound of compassion, surprise, and admiration, and the haunting knowledge that she had idolized him in youth? what if it seemed to him hereafter but a painful dream; that he had paid for her rescue from an evil destiny with the forfeit of his own free-will and free affections? Oh, miserable fate! oh, fate ten thousand times worse than never to look upon him again! To be a curse, instead of a blessing; to be the cloud between his soul and happiness!

Eleanor clasped her hands on the open pages of that useless book, in a paroxysm of despair. Many nights had passed since she left Scotland, and day by day some portion of the energy of hope had forsaken her. Having to talk over her dearest interests, her most sacred feelings, her secret wrongs with an utter stranger, humbled and revolted her; however kindly and skillfully the gentleman to whom those interests were intrusted endeavored to fulfill his task. Being alone was inexpressibly dreary and awful. She had never been utterly alone before. There was something fearful in her very liberty; in leaving and returning to the lodgings provided for her; where no familiar face, except Sandy's ever greeted, or could greet her; where the door opened without a welcome, and closed with an alien sound; no longer the door of home—home, however miserable, still sacred—still HOME, which no other house could ever be.

The night crept wearily on; the long line of lamps twinkled down the street, where the roll of carriages, and the pacing of foot-passengers became less and less frequent, as the slow hours waned. In that street, at that hour of apparent stillness, how many wakeful hearts might be enduring a like measure of anxiety! In one house perhaps a mother singing hymns to a dying child; in another, a gambler staking his last throw; in a third, lovers passionately murmuring words that drop like fire where they fall; in a fourth, the dull, happy oblivion of dreamless sleep; in a fifth, toil going on till daylight!

Eleanor felt so weary, so incapable of mastering the distasteful study of Ferguson's precedents, that she rose with the intention of retiring to rest. As she gathered the papers together to lock them in her desk, she perceived that there was still two letters she had not opened. They had been brought to her while her lawyer was explaining, and discussing; and after he went, her thoughts had wandered so far into the unreal, that she had forgotten them. She opened them now. One was from Mr. Malcolm, who had had some difficulty in finding her address, entreating to be allowed an interview with her. The other was from Margaret. She opened that eagerly; there must be comfort in a letter from Margaret. Eleanor had written to her the day she left home, a brief note, telling her that she was resolved to part from Sir Stephen Penrhyn, and begging to hear from her. Margaret's letter began with warm and sorrowful expressions of condolence and affection; but she dissuaded Eleanor from the step she was about to take; and which she imagined was only the usual sort of separation in cases of domestic dissensions. She knew nothing of the contemplated divorce.

"Do not part from your husband, my dear Eleanor," the letter ran. "Even if it were not a sin, so to abandon your vowed duties, do not part from him! The meanest man that ever lived is a protector to his wife. His name and position are her protection. You are right and he is wrong: what will that avail you? In heaven, much; on earth, nothing! Some have not time, some have not courage to balance the truth of your story: some are glad to believe the worst of any woman who parts from her husband: some take it for granted. Your heart will rise in defiance against this reasoning; you think with scorn of those who would think evil of you—but reptiles are not harmless. Snakes dart poison with their tongues, and toads spit venom. I know you—I love you—I trust you. I feel for you the most unbounded indulgence and compassion. I think of him with a shudder, and yet I say to you, do not leave him. Do your duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call you. Common decency, and the representation of mutual friends, must prevent him repeating the insult he offered you in your own house the day he brought young Owen there: and for the rest you must take patience. According to my view of the marriage vow, it is irrevocable; nothing but death should part you. The Duchess of Lanark startled me by the assurance that you had already consulted with David Stuart, and that he advised this. Her authority was Lady Peebles, who had heard it from Mr. Malcolm through some lawyer: but I can not believe it. I will not believe his regard and pity for you, could so warp his view of your true interests. Even if it were so, dear, unhappy Eleanor, hold firm. Trust no one's judgment in this; for this is a question of principle. The alternative is not, wise or unwise—the alternative is, right or wrong.

"Ah! if you had still your children, what a balance that would make in your mind! How you would anchor, that are now in such danger of drifting with the storm!

"Do you know what the life is, that you desire to attempt for yourself? Have you ever watched it in others? You leave home because you are wretched—you will be wretched still—and more helpless. You will live in seclusion,

you think: but can you be sealed hermetically and sunk in waves of oblivion, like the genii of the Arabian tales? Will no one pity you, will no one admire you, will no one seek to comfort you? Will you, with your warm heart and impulsive nature, live and die without a preference? My Eleanor, if is impossible! By Heaven's good mercy, it may lead to no actual sin, but it will make life a restless fever, instead of the calm you seek. That bond you could scarcely bear, while strengthened by the walls of your home—will it guard you forever when it is merely nominal? Do not part from your husband, Eleanor! Return among us, you that we love—you that we respect; bear the trials of your youth—it will so soon fleet by! Life is long, but youth is brief; if we can but struggle through that, the rest is comparatively easy. Remember that what you do now will be irrevocable. No one can say, give me my life again, I will make a better use of it. By what we do, we must abide. The rapid present, flowing by like the unreturning river, bears us from our past into our future without a pause. We can but look back and see our joys, our griefs, our faults, and our mistakes, lying like stranded weeds on the shore of time. We can not return and lift them away. We can not alter our former course because we see better now where the great shoals lay. It behoves us then to weigh well what we mean to do, before we do it. How solemn it seems when even a fellow-creature says to us, "I will give you an hour to consider!" God gives us every hour an hour to consider what our course shall be; but we will not so employ the time. Like a map whose boundaries are unmarked, our life lies trackless before us, and we go forward at hazard—for *forward* we must go: in that alone we have no choice.

"Eleanor, I beseech you not to think that because I was myself a happy wife, I am therefore unfitted to comprehend or advise you in your present position. It was my blessed fate to live with one I loved and respected; but had it been otherwise, I feel as sure as any mortal creature dare affirm of themselves, that I should have endured to the end; that I should still have been able to say with Milton:

> "'I argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope: but still bear up and steer
> Right on!'

And oh! do not think that what I say in the way of encouragement is said in the way of boasting. I do not compare myself with you; it is my love for you that speaks! Come back to us; do not part from your husband: when I have sealed and sent this letter, I will kneel down and pray for you. God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, knows how earnest is my affection for you, and my desire to serve you; and He can comfort and strengthen you when all other comfort and all other strength must fail."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE DREAM FADES.

ELEANOR returned again and again to two sentences in Margaret's letter. That which referred to her guardian, and that which alluded to her children. Margaret would not believe that even his pity and regard could so warp David Stuart's views of Eleanor's true interests, that he would countenance or advise her separation from her husband. What would Margaret think, if the truth were made known to her? if she were told, that instead of the withdrawal of an injured and insulted wife from the home where she had been outraged; instead of a simple separation, she contemplated a divorce; and a divorce for the express purpose of being enabled legally to become the companion of the man whose counsels Margaret considered perverted if they leaned to the dividing of man and wife.

Again the solemn miserable words beat, with their heavy knell, in Eleanor's ear: "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." What God hath joined! She saw herself standing before the sacrament-table, listening and trembling under her long white vail, a young and most unhappy bride; vowing, for the unseen future whose limit was in God's hand; vowing for all the years that should intervene between that passing instant and death! When she made that vow, she made it in simple sincerity, and with deep sorrowful awe; when she made it, she believed in truth that only death could end the union by which it pledged her to abide. Was it such a vow as she had then deemed it, or was it an empty form of words? To how many might it be repeated, if it did not necessarily hold good for one alone? Again and again might the same lips vow to be "true till death," according to the success and happiness which attended the linking of the hand with a newly-selected partner. Where was the limit which should yet rivet that broken bond with a link of sacred faith? That vow—that broken vow—could its words rising up to insult Heaven with echoes of the past, ever do more, in fact, than make her a contented paramour of the man she loved? could it ever do more than lull her with a vain sound of holiness—a cradle song for conscience to go to sleep by? Would she herself, in her own secret heart, believe it possible to be wedded to David Stuart by a murmured repetition of the same sentences which married her to Sir Stephen Penrhyn? Never! she felt that in her soul and conscience, that ceremony would be nothing but a delusive mockery; that the roof of God's temple would be but the shelter of unhallowed love; that the stones of its sacred aisles would be merely a path to David Stuart's arms.

What if he also thought so? What if to him, as to her, the blasphemy of that vainly-taken oath gleamed with a livid light over the unholy future; and the hot fever of remorse withered and destroyed the blossoms of a perishing love? He would not own it to her, for he was tempted; he desired her to be his wife—he loved her—she knew he loved her; but in his conscience, as in hers, truth might even now be struggling for mastery; now, while yet the radiant virtue wore the shape of a warning angel, instead of an avenging spirit; standing alone in its serene brightness, unaccompanied by regret, repentance, and despair. Oh! what was earthly hope, and earthly passion, in comparison of the great, terrible judgment that would be passed hereafter by the light and glory of truth?

Her guardian had advised her to abide by the laws of his country for rescue and for freedom; but even his own letter showed the construction that might be put upon their love. He promised never to see her, never even to breathe the same air, or approach the spot where she dwelt, till she was free of her bonds. What did that mean? It meant that the stamp of degradation was on the idea that Sir Stephen Penrhyn's wife loved David Stuart; it meant that sin was the watch-word of their hope.

The whole question was, whether that sin could be lessened by being legalized. It might certainly be legalized, if the struggle now making were successful. Did it therefore cease to be sin? Eleanor could not bring herself to believe that it did. There was, as Margaret truly said, but one right and one wrong; the painful right and the pleasant wrong stood now in antagonistic contrast to each other. In Eleanor's youth she had married a man she did not love, whom she did not profess to love, for certain advantages—to avoid certain threatening miseries. She had enjoyed those advantages; she had been rescued from those miseries; and now that they were over, had she the right to annul the unloving vow, for the sake of the first, her only great temptation?

True, her husband was false to her; but his falsehood could not quit her of her vow. His sin was not to be balanced by her sin; even were it because of his sin, and not because of her own wild love, that she had forever forsaken the shelter of his house.

True she was scarcely more than a child when she vowed away her future; a child bewildered by sorrow and distress, argued with, advised, entreated, caressed into this marriage, by the best and fondest of her friends, as well as by those who looked upon it in a mere worldly point of view. But neither did that render the marriage vow of no effect. That might be a warning for others, that might be a beacon light to show on how dangerous a shoal life's happiness was wrecked, when its main anchor, choice, was cast aside at the very onset, and weak submission, or self-interest, or a despondent carelessness that would not look beyond the darkened hour of trial, swayed the heart to acceptance of what was in no way truly acceptable. It might be an argument against irreligious, ill-considered, unholy marriages a warning to the experienced who undertake to persuade, and to the young who distrust the great instinct which bids them resist; but for the fact of her marriage, it did nothing. All that was for others, not for her; for those who had a future; she had only the past. She can not, as Margaret's letter said, do more than look back and see her errors and mistakes lying stranded on the shore of Time; she could not return and lift them away—she could not reverse or alter them. Eleanor Raymond was Eleanor Raymond no more: happy or miserable, she was a wife, the wife of Stephen Penrhyn!

She had been the mother of his children. She thought of the tender sentence in Margaret's letter, "Oh! if you had still your children, how you would anchor, that are now in such danger of drifting with the storm!" It was true—it was true—and with a burst of weeping, Eleanor *leaned her head on* her hands, thinking how, if her children had lived, it would have seemed to her at once sinful and impossible to leave home. Was the sin annulled because those dear ones had been called away from her to a better and holier world? Was their father no longer her husband, because God had bereaved him of his sons?

She thought of her children with a fresh anguish, that had slumbered of late in the consolation of David's presence. Of a letter she had found of her own, when hunting among law-proofs and papers, a letter written when home was yet endurable, giving an account of the children to her husband, of the little sayings and doings that interest parents only; of Clephane especially, of his going to church for the first time, the flush of joy with which he turned to her when he heard a parable which he understood, and was familiar with, read in the lessons for the day. She thought of the real piety of that sweet child; his sad death, his making no call for rescue, but repeating, in a loud, plaintive voice, the first line of the prayer, "Our Father which art in Heaven," and while she thought of these things, the fever of human passion seemed to die out of her heart, and the image of another and a better world rose over the restless perplexities of this, luminous, majestic, and holy, like the moon at sea. She remembered some lines she had written many months after her children had died. They recurred to her now with haunting distinctness, and I give them here even at the risk of many of my readers thinking the grief light or untrue which can express itself in such a form. Those who make such a criticism will forgive my saying that it proves only that poetry is not a natural language to them. The Persian, or the Icelander, will grieve in tongues which are unknown to us; but their feelings are not the less real because we are unfamiliar with their mode of expressing their sorrow, their passion, or their joy.

Poetry *is* a natural language to some persons. Nay, chords of music do not form more easily under the hand of a musician, than the melody of words to those who have the other gift. You shall see the musician sit down and run over the keys with wandering eyes that are perhaps watching in the crowd some face that pleases him, and he will produce what to you seems full of an abstruse science of a difficult mechanical skill, yet the lovely music to him shall be ease and delight, and a message of delight to others. It is so with the poet. Did Canning not grieve for his son, think you, when he wrote the epitaph for his tomb, in the church-yard at Kensington? Did Elton not lament his boys, drowned in each other's arms, when he wrote the poems over which many a parent has since wept for sympathy? Were the lines to a sick child, by Alaric Watts, composed by a man callous to his child's suffering? Or is the seal of an intense and enduring regret doubtfully set on Tennyson's "In Memoriam?"

To say that the grief which is expressed in verse must be unfounded, is to say that a plant has no root because you see only the flowers. Nothing ever touched the heart of the reader that did not come from the heart of the writer: your sympathy is the test of our truth. For that which is untrue has no power to affect: the most skillful and admirable composition of that sort

will be but like a sweet sound wandering without an echo over a level surface into the deep cavern of your heart; where it should find an answer, it has not strength to enter.

Eleanor lamented her children in verse, when she ceased to lament in tears. Ah! believe that she lamented still!

"Ye were mine, flesh and soul; mine, oh! my children,
A portion of myself is torn away,
The breath of life seems stifled in our parting,
And death-like darkness clouds my lonely day!
A chill, sick shudder thrills my yearning bosom,
Where never more your gentle arms shall twine,
The memory of your voices doubles anguish;
Your voices that no longer answer mine!
Yet cease, my soul! Oh! hush this vain lamenting;
Earth's anguish will not alter Heaven's decree;
In that calm world whose peopling is of angels,
Those I called mine, still live, and wait for me.
They can not re-descend where I lament them;
My earth-bound grief no sorrowing angel shares;
And in their peaceful and immortal dwelling,
Nothing of me can enter—but my prayers!
If this be so—then, that I may be near them,
Let me still pray unmurmuring, night and day.
God lifts us gently to his world of glory,
Even by the love we feel for things of clay.
Lest in our wayward hearts we should forget Him,
And forfeit so the mansion of our rest,
He leads our dear ones forth, and bids us seek them,
In a far distant home, among the blest.
So we have guides to Heaven's eternal city,
And when our wandering feet would backward stray,
The faces of our DEAD arise in brightness,
And fondly beckon to the holier way!"

Eleanor remembered the verse. She remembered her feelings at the time they were written—the fervor of her prayers; the constant communion of her soul with God. What temptations could *then* have been strong enough to shake her from that trust?

"Else will recant
Vows made in pain, as violent as void."

But could the memory of those dear ones so fade from her heart, that the thought of them would have no power to save her? Her nursery, in the old days before she was childless, rose to her mind. She saw her children, kneeling and looking up at her while they lisped the evening hymn; the bright, shadowy eyes of Frederick; the soft, wistful glance of Clephane. Almost she heard the voice of those little ones, saying, "Pray!" With a wild burst of weeping she sank to her knees, and with hands clasped and wrung with anguish, and in a low, sobbing voice, she murmured her brief, bitter prayer,

"Oh, God! bring me back to Thee, though it be by a thorny path!"

A loud, double knock at the house door recalled her to the world of realities. Who was it? What could it be? Not him—not *him:* he had promised not to come!

While she yet stood trembling on the spot where she had risen from her knees, a firm, rapid step was heard on the stairs; the door was flung open, and her half-brother, Godfrey Marsden, stood before her.

CHAPTER L.

GODFREY MARSDEN.

YES, it was Godfrey. The intelligence Mr. Malcolm was reading in the newspaper, when Sir Stephen spoke twice without being heard, was the telegraphed arrival of Godfrey's ship from the Pacific. The circumstance appeared to Tib's kindly suitor to be a direct interference of Providence, to save Lady Penrhyn from the scandal and distress of an open quarrel with her husband. He instantly resolved to seek Captain Marsden, and inform him of all that had occurred, so that he might at once interfere for his sister's protection from insult, and procure a reconciliation. Good, earnest, and simple, he saw only the obvious and external causes of Eleanor's departure; and it appeared to him that if Bridget were sent away to Wales, and young Owen to school, Eleanor might be brought to pardon the day of outrage, which Sir Stephen's anger at the threatened horse-whipping of the little lad had brought upon her. After all, he was not the first gentleman in Scotland who had owned a natural son, though matters had been brutally and untowardly managed; and it was "no to be thocht o'!" that so painful an event as the forsaking of her husband and home, by the sweet mistress of Penrhyn Castle, was to be the consequence. So Mr. Malcolm made a rapid journey to Portsmouth. He traveled second class, for he had as little money as any man in the station of a gentleman could command, and that little was principally expended in the hire of a companion for an old blind aunt who had brought him up. He made a cold, comfortless journey, for Eleanor's sake, from the heart of the Highlands to Portsmouth Docks; and without stopping an instant for rest or refreshment after he got there, he cramped up his long legs in the only wet boat he could procure, and went tossing over the wintry sea in that chillest of hours, the hour before dawn, till he got alongside Godfrey's ship. He told the stern, agitated sailor every thing he knew, wrung him by the hand, and returned to London, where, with some difficulty, he discovered where Eleanor lodged, and the name of her legal adviser.

As soon as Captain Marsden could leave his ship, he also made a hurried journey to town; and proceeding first to the lawyer, and explaining who he was, and what his interest in Lady Penrhyn's affairs, was perfectly thunderstruck at receiving in return the information that Eleanor was about to divorce her husband, and had given him all necessary instructions for that purpose.

With Godfrey's notions, it is not surprising that he at once took the darkest and severest view of Eleanor's conduct. David Stuart's return, this domestic quarrel, this burst of independence and defiance on the part of a young, shy, reserved woman, could bear but one interpretation. He remembered the day after David's supposed suicide, when the conviction of Eleanor's love for this man was impressed upon his mind. He never doubted for an instant that the divorce was to set her free to marry Stuart. He never doubted that she had known for years of his existence, and corresponded with him in America.

"So," said he, in his sternest and most repeling manner, as she rose in fear and wonder to greet him, "I was to have a ship, I was to be sent to sea, that this fellow might skulk back undetected into your home!"

"What do you mean?—what *do* you mean?" faltered Eleanor. "Is it possible that you can suppose I was aware my guardian was alive? Can you think so ill of me as to deem me capa-

ble of such monstrous, such unheard-of hypocrisy?"

"I have thought ill of you, as you call it, ever since I thought about you at all: nothing you have ever done has given me any esteem for you; much has inspired me with contempt. Either you have been guilty of that monstrous hypocrisy the suspicion of which revolts you, or you are so irresolute and unprincipled, that circumstances and want of opportunity, have alone retarded your progress to sin. Deny to others what you will, to me it is as clear as day, that, in forsaking your husband and home, you are acting under David Stuart's advice, and in the hope of becoming, by a most indecent fiction of the law, his wedded wife. I am here to prevent it!"

She had prayed to be brought back, even by a thorny path. Ah! how literally did her prayer seemed to be heard and answered!

"I will deny nothing," said she; "though God, who sees the heart, knows how little I deserve your severe judgment. As to your interference, I do not know by what right—"

"By what right—by what right!" exclaimed Godfrey; "by the right an honest heart has to interfere with baseness; by the right which I think may be assumed by the son of the widow, and the brother of the orphan, to whom, in an evil hour, Sir John Raymond left a villain *guardian!*"

The crushing contempt of the last word smote Eleanor.

"Godfrey," said she, "I prayed for strength just before you came in, and I think I may now pray for patience. I am not bound to stay and hear you speak ill of a friend whom I shall forever love and esteem: his one fault has long since been blotted out by years of penance and hard endeavors."

"His one fault!—did you ever hear of a man of that sort stopping at one fault? No! weak once, weak forever; treacherous once, treacherous forever. He will go on doing self-denial by deputy, all his life; forcing out of others whatever sacrifices heaven calls upon him to make; giving his burden to others to carry. The magnitude of his offenses and their frequency will depend upon the magnitude of his temptations, for he will resist none. The conduct of a man without strong principle becomes a mere series of accidents."

Eleanor felt faint—she leaned back, and said, feebly:

"Spare him, he has suffered so much!"

"Suffer! yes, that is the answer of all such men: they fling the happiness, the interests, the past and the future of others under the Juggernaut wheels of their own selfish irresolutions; and when you reproach them with their crushed victims, they reply: 'I also suffered!'—'I also felt pain; and, to avoid its endurance for one, I openly and avowedly burdened others with double, treble, centuple its amount. I feared for myself, and left them by the road-side bleeding.' To save himself the petty mortification in early life which his father's misconduct entailed on him, he risked your whole fortune (which he had no right to invest at all, unless for your advantage); and now he would seduce you from your husband and your home—degrade *and ruin you! Oh!*" said he, severely, "there are crimes which human justice can not punish, but which will be judged of God!"

"Godfrey!" replied Eleanor, in a trembling voice, "I might repeat Margaret's words to you on a former occasion, and say: 'Leave it, then, to God to judge him!' When I see the cold and fierce contempt of your countenance, I lean more than ever to that friend of my friendless childhood; instead of blaming him, I yearn for his unbounded indulgence, for the eyes that never met mine without a look of welcome, for the voice that never addressed me in any tones, but those of tenderness. If you have heard my story aright, you will know that David Stuart has nothing to do with this, that Sir Stephen's conduct—"

"His conduct can not justify yours. Much of what has happened in your home, is most undoubtedly your own fault."

"My fault!"

"Yes; I know what that life was: I know you!"

"I deny that you know me!" said Eleanor, passionately. "Those know us who live with us; you have never lived with me. You have made one of your own intolerant sketches of what you suppose my disposition to be, and you have filled in that sketch, right or wrong, with every circumstance that has come under your observation. David Stuart lived in daily intercourse with me for eight years—eight blessed, happy years—and it is not because they ended in darkness that I will admit your right to judge either him or me, ignorant as you are of the motives of either. My fault! prove it my fault, that being daily with one so lovable, I loved him, though he failed me, and perished, as we all believed. Prove it my fault, that my children perished, too; that while others, while you yourself return safe and strong from shipwreck and mortal danger, my dear ones sank in a summer's day, without a breath of wind to ruffle the water. Prove it my fault, that after doing my best to show the affection and duty of a wife to a fierce and brutal husband, I found myself rivaled and mocked on the very threshold of my own home, by one little above the condition of a domestic. Fitter for him than me, far fitter; and would he had thought so, and married her!"

As she spoke the last words with passionate scorn, Eleanor rose from her seat, and, looking wildly round the room, and toward the door, she added, in a choked, husky voice:

"Go away! I am worn out; I wish you to leave me! I have a right to protest against this intrusion, even from you. It is now three in the morning—I am much fatigued—I have much to reflect upon—it can afford you little satisfaction to stay and torture me by hard words; leave me, or I must bid you good-morning, and leave you."

"I did not come here to torture you, Eleanor; I came here to do my duty by you, or what I conceive to be my duy, in the relation in which we stand toward each other. I came to endeavor to prevent scandal; to offer you a home with my wife, till, as I hope, matters may be arranged with your husband."

"Never! and for your offer of a home—the manner of that offer would alone preclude my accepting it."

"Such as it is, there it is. I do not affect to

offer it from regard or affection. It is offered for my mother's sake; in her name; to assist, as far as I can, in the support of respectability, which appears to me to be on the eve of forfeiture. You know Emma feels kindly to you: you are welcome to come to us. If you persist in this divorce scheme, I do not say that I should then wish you to be with her."

"It is not my intention to pursue the divorce."

"No!—I am most solemnly rejoiced to hear you say so. I trust you will see the propriety of returning to Sir Stephen. Your husband is a man of violent passions, and you have chosen to live with him on terms of little affection. You find excuses readily for David Stuart; find excuses also for the man to whom you are knit by indissoluble—or what ought to be indissoluble bonds."

"Godfrey! I will not deceive you—I had determined, before you arrived, to relinquish the divorce. I made that resolution from religious scruples, and upon principle; but no power shall induce me to return to Castle Penrhyn; perhaps, if you knew all, even *you* would not counsel it!"

And Eleanor thought of her broken arm, and all she had witnessed and heard at the lodge.

"Do not say, 'even *you*,' Eleanor! I do not desire to be harsh with you. I assure you, whether you believe it or not, it is more satisfactory to me that you should have made up your mind, on principle, before I came, than if I could control you. I will say nothing more at present about a reconciliation with Sir Stephen. I will call to-morrow, hoping to find you willing to accompany me at once to Emma's cottage, at Southsea: and I beseech you, for our dead mother's sake, to consider well what you do, that is inconsistent with a woman's duty and reputation. My mother was not as clever as you are, Eleanor; but she had clear views of right and wrong; and, weak and simple as her nature was, it was strong enough to serve God better, I think, than you do. She had her trials. Good-night!"

And Godfrey sighed; for he always felt a jealous sorrow when he thought of the love his mother had borne toward Sir John Raymond, and a jealous regret that she could not so love his own father, whom she had always feared, and never blamed!

He was as much softened as it was in his nature to be; and, as he said good-night, he took Eleanor's hand, and touched her forehead with his lips. It was a kiss given more to his mother's memory, than to the weary, pale, unhappy young creature who stood before him; and the momentary pressure seemed as cold, and grieved, and hard, as if it had been on the iron-rails which surrounded Lady Raymond's tomb.

When Eleanor was left alone, the night was far spent; but before it was over, she had written to the lawyer, and to David Stuart.

What that night held of anguish and tears; what that letter cost of struggle and wild regret, God only knew, who saw fit so to try one of his creatures. Sorrow is, unhappily, not so rare in this world; but some of those who will read these pages will be able to measure the depth of her misery by their own experience. And for those who can not do so, to whom the agony of a bleeding heart is as yet a mystery and a marvel, I pray that God may permit it always to remain a marvel and a mystery to them, and that they may be among the favored group who seem, from the first, to have been set in a groove of better and calmer fortune, and who so continue to their journey's end.

CHAPTER LI.

PARTING PANGS.

The wild sea was tossing restlessly, and a few pilot-boats, and boats out oyster-dredging, alone broke the monotony of the view between Southsea and Ryde, when the post-hour brought David Stuart's answer to Emma Marsden's tranquil cottage.

"This is for you, dear," said the gentle wife of her stern half-brother. "I wish you could have some good news."

And, in Emma's simple heart, she thought the best news that could arrive would be a letter from Sir Stephen, ordering Eleanor instantly to return home, on pain of his severest displeasure, and even if he was extremely cross to her on her return, and dreadfully passionate, and swore, Emma thought it would be but just; for no history of wrong or insult (not that Eleanor had added one word of explanation to the brief, dry recital Godfrey thought sufficient for his wife, or dreamed of giving such a history) could dethrone the notions of a husband in Emma's mind. She saw in Eleanor, though she truly loved her, not an unhappy woman, but a revolted subject; and she could not recover from her frightened amazement at the idea of that unprotected journey; that independent arrival in the great, swarming city of London; that sitting down in strange lodgings alone! If she had been told that Eleanor had set off by herself for the Pampas, or to hunt wild buffalo in the plains of North America, she could scarcely have been more astonished, or thought of her situation with greater dread.

Eleanor withdrew to her own room to read the letter. She held it a minute or two in her hand before she had courage to break the seal. She hoped David would have taken calmly what she wrote; but her mind misgave her. She had an instinct that his heart would be deeply wounded; but she had no instinct of the way he would write to her; she had no prophetic warning of the wild bitterness of uncontrolled reproach with which he would address her, of whose gentleness and indulgence she had so confidently boasted to Godfrey.

"You do not love me—you never loved me!" he said. "If you loved as I do, these scruples would be threads that would snap asunder, not chains to bind you down to a miserable form of virtue, in which the spirit is wanting. What claim has your husband upon your faith? Does *he* love you? Has *he* suffered for you? Is the day darkness, the night fever, and time itself a blank to him, because of your loss? Does he pine for you till the very air seems to load, instead of relieve his gasping bosom, as I do? Is it madness and death to him, to look to the days in which he shall seek and not find you? Does he yearn for your voice, in the great dreadful silence round him, as though earth had held

but that one sound, and dumbness were spread out like a shroud over all living things since it departed? Has *he* given to the single thought of you the energies of eight years of his youth, in exile, privation, and disgrace? What is the vow worth that binds you to such a man? Will you be wiser and purer than the law which is administered by the upright, and countenanced by the devout? Will you hold it a sin to stand before God's altar with me, and so tell God's minister, who should unite us, that he is a sinner for so doing? Do you think the right and wrong of all this was never considered till you sate trembling and alone to think it over? Alone—oh! I repent letting you depart alone! I repent that mad respect for worldly rules which prevented my making you my own at once; which prevented my bearing you from that home of suffering to one we might have shared together; for you would have gone with me that night, Eleanor—you know you would!"

"I renounce you! You have forbidden me to claim you! you have assured me your resolution is unalterable; that it is a vow before God, in presence of the memory of your children! Be it so. Withdraw your love—your love that I dreamed not of possessing till *you* led me to hope for it in that time, when, like one who rests by a well in the desert before he toils onward through the barren sands, I rested in your home, and I thought to leave it for a renewed exile! Ah! Eleanor, what is your love worth?—your lukewarm love, that has always stepped in trembling at every foot of ground that was to lead to me! That was always weaker than your fears, and my misfortunes! I abjure it! I cast it from my heart! To forsake me now!—now that a gleam of light shone at length over the future! What argument can you conjure up that was not in full force the day your promise bound you to me?—for you could not mistake my letter, Eleanor. It is said plainly, though not in those brief words: *Free yourself from this man, and be my wife!* and your answer was: *I will!*

"What has been changed since in our relative positions?—what has come between us? unless it be the pleading of your half-brother, who always opposed and hated me? Eleanor, I do not believe the breaking of your most unhallowed marriage would be a sin. I do not believe, that in condemning me to the deepest misery, you are one whit more acceptable to God. I look upon all this as miserable woman's weakness, and I protest against it with all the strength of my despairing soul!"

That was his letter; he for whom she had lived; for whom she could willingly die. She folded the letter, and replaced it in its envelope, and sate stupidly gazing at the direction. Her own name was there; her own name, in the well-known hand-writing, which shone out from among other letters, as if illuminated with a halo. Was it, in truth, a letter from him?

The flood-gates of sorrow and weakness were loosened. She wept, and dried her tears, and wept again. Then, exhausted by her agitation, she lay down and slept heavily for an hour; and woke, as they wake who are in sorrow, with a vague sense of pain, and a hope that all was a dream, and saw again the letter, and the cold, *dim, dreary* sea from the window, and assured herself that all was real, that the letter was his, and the sea the same she had sailed over with him that sweet, calm moonlight night in summer, when they took her for a holiday to the Isle of Wight.

Ah, miserable change!

She did not read his letter again; but she answered it.

"You tell me I have not loved you. Oh, do not teach me to reproach you as you have reproached me! You have loved me, since you had time to think of me; but I have loved you ever since I was a child! Your love for me has been one thought among many; but mine for you was the thread on which all other thoughts were strung. Do you think there is no love but that to which union is possible? Do you think I did not love your memory all those years that I believed you dead, that you spent in America? Oh, better than any earthly and actual reality, I loved the dear dreams of by-gone companionship! The years that you were with me, I read, and thought, and studied for your living sake! The years after your loss, I did all for the sake of your memory! I would rather have looked on a page folded down, or marked by your hand, than the fairest sight under heaven! And I love you still, dear David Stuart. Love is not gone: happiness is gone: that never was meant for my companion. It is true I understood your letter; true I answered it; true that had you come for me that fatal day, I should have been lost. Do not regret it; love me too well to regret it; rather thank heaven that it was not so!

"It is true you have suffered. But those eight years of struggle and remorse, though they were for me, were not by my fault. The years to come would be by my fault. I know what efforts you must have made to blind your heart. I know that to you as to me, crime blots the love which we would give each other. We should be three, not two, in that home you image to yourself. Shame would sit by us on the hearth, and shadow our coming in and going out. Not for an hour, not for a year, the awful vows bind! 'Till death do part us.' How repeat those words to you, having broken them to another? Let us be miserable apart—not miserable together. Let us be miserable and innocent—not miserable and guilty. I feel that I have more strength to endure as I am, than as I should be. To be far from you is dreadful, but oh! to be near you *in vain;* to sit by your side and not dare to read in your heart, or tell you what was passing in mine, that would indeed be terrible? Let us be patient under this great anguish, till it please Heaven to lift it away—as all human anguish *is* lifted away at last! Regret nothing that has saved me from sin. You first taught me the spirit and the meaning of prayer. Do not lament it. I cling to my prayers as though they were the strong cords by which angels could still draw my tempted soul toward heaven. I thank you for them—I think of you as you were when I was a feeble orphan child, sick of a long fever, when you were pleading with Heaven for my life. God bless you, dear David Stuart: Go and see Margaret and the Lanarks: do not stay too much alone: write to me: I am sure you have already regretted any sentence in your letter which I did not deserve."

Yes! he had already repented those sentences. Even before her gentle loving letter reached him, he had written his repentance, and blotted it with his weeping.

"At this hour," he said, "my life lies spread before me, shaming me with its want of purpose and irresolution. When I came from India, I desired but one thing on earth—to do my duty by your father's child. I failed in it! I fled the post where I was set sentinel against the dangers of your future. I thought to repair that error: a providential change enabled me to restore your fortune: a wayward impulse brought me to look upon your face: I saw that divine countenance once more. The moment came, when I felt that I should do well never more to look on it again: but I staid. In the hour of our mutual sorrow, I reproached you—and now—what remains for me but to bid you pray for me sometimes, and be at peace! Oh! when I think that I dared to vaunt my privations as a title to your love; that the mad, mean boast was in my letter, that I had suffered for your sake—I that only suffered for my sin! Did I indeed think a few years of laborious exile sufficient penance for my fault? No! my penance comes now. Then—when your young heart gave itself to me—when, in peace and youth, I might have claimed you, I was self-exiled by my crime; and now—now that I could tear my heart out to leave you, Heaven exiles me through you! Farewell, my Eleanor! I have no words abject enough to implore your pardon; I will strive to be thankful that I was not suffered to be the means of leading you to that which you believe to be a sin. I will strive to think of you not as a woman, not as my ideal of love and loveliness, but as the little child, who sat in the sunshine at Aspendale, with its pale, perfect face bowed over that manuscript sermon on instability of purpose, which has so often since risen in my memory as the unheeded warning of some angel message."

So peace was between those two: and love: and the distance of land and sea: and the yet more dreary distance of a conscious parting—a parting that was to have no reunion upon earth, unless under altered circumstances, and with feelings guarded and smothered into comparative coldness.

CHAPTER LII.

OTHERS MADE HAPPY INSTEAD OF ELEANOR.

Time flew rapidly by. More than a year had elapsed since Eleanor left her husband, and she resided still with Godfrey and Emma. Sir Stephen had been applied to, to arrange terms of separation, and make his wife an allowance: but he flatly refused: he said Eleanor had left home without his sanction or permission, and that it was not his intention to part with her: on the contrary, his will and pleasure was, to allow her at the rate of six hundred a year for the present, in consideration of the circumstances under which she left home; and her being, as Godfrey informed him, in a feeble state of health. That if, when her health bettered, she did not return to his lawful protection, he would sue her under the English law for restitution of conjugal rights, and if she disobeyed the legal order, which was sure to be the result of such proceedings, he should then hold himself free from the liability of maintaining her at all, and cease to countenance her in any way whatever. And when Godfrey (who, though a clever-headed sensible man, was no lawyer), wrote a somewhat exasperated letter to the attorney through whom this communication was made, saying that Eleanor would not return to her husband who had maltreated her; that the allowance was ridiculously small, considering her large fortune and the income Sir Stephen possessed, and that he should advise her to sue for alimony. The attorney replied with the utmost politeness, that he made every allowance for the tone of Captain Marsden's letter, as not intended to convey any personal imputation on Sir Stephen's legal advisers, and he was sure nothing but Captain Marsden's profound ignorance of the law, could lead him to contemplate the steps he suggested: as Lady Penrhyn was not in a position to sue for alimony, on the contrary, she had left home clandestinely, and remained away without her husband's consent; that the regular proceeding would be a suit on Sir Stephen's part, such as he had declared he would institute; that there was no doubt the court would order Eleanor to return; that the peccadilloes of which her husband had been guilty—though they were such as frequently created dissension in families, and were greatly to be condemned and regretted, would not form a sufficent ground of resistance to the order of the court, which looked indulgently on these masculine errors; especially as Eleanor had clearly "condoned" all she complained of, by continuing to reside under her husband's roof long after she became aware of the facts. That as to her allowance, there was no doubt it was amply sufficient for a lady dwelling, as he hoped and presumed Eleanor intended to do, in obscurity and retirement; but that his client, in a spirit of generosity and liberality, highly commendable under the circumstances, had desired him to meet Captain Marsden's remonstrance by an increase of four hundred a year; and that Lady Penrhyn would accordingly receive at the rate of a thousand a year; always providing that if she did not return within the space of two years from the date of their quarrel, Sir Stephen would sue her, as he stated, and leave her to her remedy of defense to such suit.

There was no help for it. With a perplexed and gloomy spirit, Godfrey extended the protection of his home to his half-sister, and permitted that a portion of her allowance should be paid so as to make that protection the sole favor he did her. He was sorry for her, but in his heart he blamed her; and in his heart, in spite of her declaration that she had already decided on her course before she saw him, he considered he had rescued her from probable degradation and sin. He contrived to make generosity a burden, advice an insult, and abiding with him a daily penance. The step Eleanor had acquiesced in, appeared to him to deliver her over bound into his hands. He treated her with stern authority, and watched her with jealous suspicion. Too high-minded and honorable to resolve his doubts, he nevertheless doubted over every letter from Scotland which he had to put into Eleanor's hands. On days when she seemed more depressed than usual, he always imagined

her occupied with some wavering thoughts of the divorce-scheme which she had abandoned, and broke out into stern comments on her affairs, which had no apparent connection with the conversation they might be holding at the time.

He continued his distrust of her general disposition; he thought her affected and unreal. One of his children was dangerously ill for some time, and Eleanor nursed it tenderly, after Emma was quite worn out with watching.—Godfrey was touched; he paused as he passed the half-open door of the side-room, and spoke to her in a whispered tone of kindness: he hoped she was not tired: he thanked her.

"No, oh, no! not weary. I was early inured to nursing by my poor little Clephane. I know so well the language of a sick child's eyes—whether it is pain, or thirst, or mere wakefulness that is in their expression. Oh, Godfrey! while I sit here my desolation seems a strange dream to me. I think of Clephane; it seems to me that I have him again!" And Eleanor's voice faltered with a low sob, smothered for fear of disturbing the object of her present care.

The unimaginative, unimpressionable nature of Godfrey revolted against the sudden change. His manner froze again. He left her, and went to his wife's room. She was dozing, and his step, somewhat heavy and brusque, startled her.

"Did I wake you?" said he. "I've been in to see the boy; he's better. Eleanor is with him. It is such a pity she can't help acting, even in times of real feeling. I thanked her, and she went off directly into tears about Clephane, who has been dead these three years, and of whom I have heard her talk a hundred times quite calmly."

"Perhaps she is tired," said Emma, in a choked voice; repressing a strong impulse also to burst into tears. being very weak and anxious, and growing daily more attached to her unhappy sister-in-law. "Perhaps she is tired. She is so very kind, dear Godfrey, and the children are so very fond of her," added she, pleadingly.

"Yes; they do not see her faults: I do."

And the stern sailor turned away; and, shutting the door with a suddenness that made Emma start in her bed, retired to take a stroll by himself, and reflect upon Eleanor's errors.

Lady Margaret had spent the winter at Naples; on her way back to Dunleath in the spring, she came to see her old friends at their pretty cottage in the Isle of Wight. She wished very much to take Eleanor with her to Dunleath, but the latter shrank from the notion of such an abode, even though shared with Margaret. The two friends parted sorrowfully, for Margaret thought Eleanor looking very ill, and Eleanor was beginning to comprehend how it was that people might "die of a broken heart;" a phrase which she had held to be fabulous; but which seemed to be daily more and more clearly interpreted to her by her own feelings. A death, not sudden or violent, but like that of a flower broken at its stalk; a dreary, sapless lingering sort of life, ending some withered day, without apparent struggle. Well, she would not mind dying so—if it was to be.

Godfrey consulted the doctors about her. *They recommended* "cheerful society, and change of scene." They said they had seldom seen such complete prostration without actual disease; and that English persons, born in India, had often that sort of delicate, nervous, languid constitution.

Godfrey pitied her—but he was also provoked. Provoked to think how excellent a lot she had had, if she would but "have made the best of it:" provoked at this illness that was no illness; this prostration without disease; this necessity for change of scene—which he did not choose to hint at her taking alone, and yet considered it highly inconvenient to share. Having, however, duly considered what it would be right to do, he came to her one morning, and in a grave, determined way, as though he were pronouncing the sentence of a court-martial, and returning her her sword with a reprimand, he informed her that Emma much wished to see Switzerland, and that they were going there on a pleasure jaunt for a couple of months or so, which he hoped would be agreeable to Eleanor, and amend her health. Which intimation Eleanor received with some degree of pleasure, and to Godfrey's great satisfaction, smiled, and said she should like it very much. It was a relief to her, to leave that sunny little island, where she had been for her holiday in girlish days; a relief to go among strange mountains where, as in the calm world to come, there should be "no more sea;" where she could not daily behold those restless waves, whose vain change of light and shade, of storm and fair weather, gave her back incessantly one simple picture of the yacht by moonlight, with David Stuart clasping her in his arms, while the heavy brig was passing which had nearly run them down.

They went to Switzerland; but Eleanor's health did not improve; she bore the fatigue with difficulty, and when they reached Geneva, it was decided that she should rest there a few days. Some chill which she got in her first sail on the lake brought on inflammation of the lungs, and they were compelled to make halt for her recovery. Godfrey went hither and thither on expeditions, and Emma gently and gratefully returned to her sister-in-law, the care and nursing which the latter had so lately bestowed on Emma's sick child.

The fresh blue Rhone swept onward under the windows of the hotel where Eleanor was lying on the sofa, and Emma sat working by her side, when a waiter vaguely announced a "compatriote," and Mr. Malcolm, looking extremely lanky, sunburnt, and glad, made his appearance. He said that he had been seeing something of Switzerland, but was now going to Naples, to the Dowager-duchess of Lanark, upon business connected with the happy event;" and asked Eleanor if she had yet got her letters from Scotland. No, Eleanor had not got them; and she sent her passport to demand any that might have arrived at the Poste Restante.

"Ye're no aware then, o' the intelligence that has been communicated to her Grace? The 'gude tidings o' great joy,' as I hope I may be pardoned for ca'ing them, being after a' but an earthly blessin', tho', indeed, Leddy Margaret's just as near a heavenly creature as any blessin' could alight upon."

"What has happened to Margaret?" said

Eleanor, with a gentle smile; "is she to have another estate bought for her?"

"Oo, mem—Leddy Penrhyn—it's just satisfactory for a' parties; and I am sure ye'll hear it wi' pairfect delight, and we'll maybe see ye back among us, in the Hieland air, that 'ill bring the color back to yere cheek," and he looked tenderly and wistfully, like an affectinate shepherd's dog, at the wan, sweet face before him. "The new is just this, and naething less, that Leddy Margaret has given consent to espouse Mr. Stuart."

The wan cheek that was to be restored to health by Highland air, reddened with a gush of color such as sometimes spreads a reflected light all over the heavens immediately before the sun goes down; and then Eleanor's face faded to a paleness so extraordinary, that Emma rose in alarm for some restorative medicine.

"Don't tell her news; don't tell her any news at all!" said poor Emma, in a terrified tone. "Can't you see how weak she is?"

"No, let him tell me; send for the letters—here *are* the letters!" and the waiter entered, and gave them to her. "Here is Margaret's letter; my dear Margaret's letter—my dear Margaret—oh, my dear Margaret!" and with wild, hysterical weeping, Eleanor sank back without opening the letter, which fell from her shuddering, nerveless hand.

Emma picked it up again, and gave her the composing draught she had already poured out, and turning to Mr. Malcolm, who stood with his eyes full of tears, dolefully repeating: "Eh, mileddy! eh, mem! eh! but this is sair wark," begged him to go, saying that he would find Captain Marsden later in the day, and that Eleanor would be better then. After which she took her work, and placed a chair on the balcony, and sate down there, so as to be able to see if Eleanor required her, or seemed worse, and yet not be an intrusion.

She had no idea that it was more to her than a startling and interesting piece of intelligence. Neither had Margaret—whose long, happy letter was now opened—any more idea that Eleanor had loved David, than that David had loved her. She remembered how clearly his agitation, the day of the thunder-storm, had been explained by miserable circumstances afterward; and that was the only occasion on which she had thought such a thing possible. Eleanor had been too much ashamed of her mistaken belief in her guardian's affection ever to confide, even to that bosom-friend, the dream of her early love; and Margaret had seen nothing in the tender welcome accorded to David at Castle Penrhyn, after his return to America, that was not perfectly natural. She had precisely the contrary experience of Lady Macfarren. The purity of her own heart prevented her from suspecting sin, and she would certainly have considered it a sin, if Eleanor had allowed her thoughts to wander to any man, being, as she was, the wife of Sir Stephen Penrhyn. It had never occurred to her, that there existed more between them than the affection of guardian and ward. The innocent-heartedness of some women, who have, nevertheless, lived in "the world," is as marvelous as the corruption of others.

She told Eleanor it had all come about very suddenly; she herself hardly knew how, but she knew she was very happy; that she and David had had a sort of boy-and-girl love for each other, in very early days; and that it was to him she had alluded, when she reasoned with Eleanor at the time of her marriage, and told her she had been a happy wife, though she had not married her first love; that, on returning from Naples this time, she found him looking so ill and worn, she would scarcely have recognized him; and the Duchess of Lanark, with her coquetry quite lost, in real anxiety to cheer him. That they all thought he took very much to heart Eleanor's unhappy separation from her husband; he could not bear to be spoken to on the subject. That finally, one day when they were at Lanark's Lodge, and talking of his coming over to Dunleath for a day or two, Euphemia said, innocently: "*I* wish you would come and stay always—for ever—at Dunleath; and I'm sure mamma would like it too." That the duke had laughed at Margaret's confusion at this speech, and had followed it up by observing that he really did not think Margaret would say "no" to such a proposal. And then David Stuart had turned suddenly round to thank her for her regard and compassion, and to say all sorts of wild, foolish speeches about Dunleath, and misery, and degradation; which ended, nobody knew how, in a clear understanding that he and Margaret were to make one home of it, and that he was to come to Dunleath as its master.

Then she spoke of the happy future, when Eleanor should come and stay with them, and Margaret would "build a nest for her wounded dove;" and she said as soon as they were married they meant to go to the old Duchess of Lanark at Naples for awhile, and they hoped to see Eleanor abroad; and she ended by telling Eleanor to expect no more letters signed Margaret Fordyce, for that the next would be from Margaret Stuart.

"*Margaret Stuart!*" Why did those two written words make all seem more *real* to Eleanor than any of the sentences that had preceded them? Her new signature! her claim to his name—to his future—to his past—to his past? Was it possible? Surely the past had been Eleanor's! Yet how could she feel sure of it? How, in the bewilderment and inexplicable strangeness of all present circumstances, could she feel sure even of that?

He had never loved her—never really loved her. She was too like him: she had often heard it said, that people loved best the greatest contrast to themselves. It was Margaret he had loved and leaned to always! Sweet, cheering creature, who could help loving her! Who ever resisted the charm of her presence? Why should he? Her laugh, her smile, her earnest words, who could know them and not be bewitched by them? Her smile—how vividly Eleanor recalled it! its sweetness unparalleled: the small red mouth; the glittering teeth; the kind, cordial, honest eyes, that smiled with the mouth's smiling; the tinge of triumph and energy, consciousness of power, and desire to make a generous use of power, that shone out of that noble countenance! Oh, why did it make Eleanor moan to think of these things!

He was to be happy—happy after years of suffering—happy after standing on the brink of an awful temptation, whose boundary-line had

been drawn by her hand. No one could now molest or insult him; he was to be the master of Dunleath; the Duke of Lanark's brother-in-law. Margaret had been able to do for him, without struggle, without sacrifice, all that Eleanor had vainly sighed to achieve, at whatever cost to herself. Dunleath was to be his home once more; he was to return there and find it bright again, as Eleanor had prophesied to him the day of their party, when she had pitied his grief. He would grieve no more in that home! Margaret and he were to dwell there, in all the security and repose of hallowed attachment; treading the old paths they had known in childhood, before he ever saw Eleanor's face; singing the songs they used to sing at quiet Aspendale.

Well, *he* was to be happy. What else mattered on this side heaven? He was to have peace and safe anchorage after the weary storms of his youth. Did she wish it otherwise? would she think of her own wrecked life, which nothing could set right; which was for ever darkened—and by him?

No, for she loved him still! If one wild flash of thought showed her the abyss of her own destiny, it was only to bid her heart, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, swing round to the deep sea-anchorage of her early trust in him. Why misjudge him? how had he erred? had she not herself made irrevocable sentence of separation between them? Was he to remain for ever without ties, because she had been his hope, who was now his despair?

No! all was right; all was well; all was for the best: and she thought of Dunleath; and prayed for Margaret and David, and the happiness of their mutual home; for she felt sure that come what may, he had loved her better then life itself.

Oh! feel sure, Eleanor! He spoke no more than truth when he told you, you were his ideal of love and loveliness. The woman who is so loved may have successors as she has had predecessors; but rivals, properly so called, she has none. Lone and different as the moon in a heaven full of stars, she remains in the world of that man's heart. He has known other women, and he has known her. It may be the love of his youth, or the wife of his old age—first love or last love—it matters not. The love, the one love that fulfills all the exigencies of illusion, all the charms of sense, and all the pleasure of companionship, comes but once in man's lifetime. The rest are substitutes, makeshifts for love; to them in vain he shall affirm, or deny, that which they desire or dread to hear. In his heart, a shadow sits throned, who for ever bends down to listen, to watch those who would approach him, and bar them out with whispers of sorrowful comparison, and the delight of remembered days.

CHAPTER LIII.

ELEANOR CEASES TO BE UNHAPPY.

Godfrey and Mr. Malcolm returned together, having met at the bridge which connects Jean Jacques Rousseau's island with the town. Captain Marsden was extremely cheerful. He *saw in* the intelligence just received. a chance, however vague, of his sister being induced contentedly to return to her husband; and, at all events, an utter impossibility, for the future, of David Stuart being any thing to her but a friend. He thought of the latter with profound contempt, and of Margaret's choice of him with surprise; but of the event itself he was sincerely glad.

Mr. Malcolm, too, was in high spirits; and when Eleanor, who had recovered her calmness, met him with tranquil kindness and asked how he had enjoyed his brief holiday tour, he became quite enthusiastic in praise of Switzerland. He assured her, he thought the road from Basle to Berne was "just the high road to heaven," and as to Chamouni, Interlachen, and the wilder portions of the country, he could not say too much in their praise.

"And to see thae wee things, the shammy-kids standin' up on the peaks o' the hills, dippin' their bits o' feet into the rosy snow, is just a gratification and a delight, such as I've had no experience o' in a' my memory. For deer-stalking's a noble sport, an' ye may mind, Leddy Penrhyn, how well I enjoyed it; but it's an every-day matter; I've been at it a' my life. But for the shammy-huntin' it's just an awakenin' surprise at every step. Oo! it's the varry maigic o' happiness! I that was ever an' always sae fond o' wild sports! Weel I mind Mistress Stuart o' Dunleath gieing a nip o' my cheek wi' her bonny white han', an' lookin' kindly in my face whan I tauld her I was to be a writer, and go up to Christison in Edinburgh. 'Will they mak' a writer o' ye, my wee wild shepherd?' quo' she. 'They'll mak' naethin' o' ye but just a hunter o' the hills.' And she was richt, mem. I'm no for the town, tho' it's my lot to be there scratchin' wi' a pen, mony a day when I'd fain be out wi' the guns an' the dogs. I'm for the hills, and the kilt, and the plaidie. Here's to the plaidie and the hills, whether they're Hieland hills or Swiss mountains!"

And in the excess of his delight, Mr. Malcolm drank a toast all to himself, and set down his glass with an ecstatic smile.

And before he bid the party farewell, he strongly advised Godfrey to go for a week or ten days to Chamouni, where there was a party of English gentlemen, two of whom were known to Captain Marsden, and had spoken of him when Mr. Malcolm mentioned his being at Geneva. And Godfrey told his wife he thought he could not better employ the days of Eleanor's convalescence, and departed accordingly for those regions of "shammy-kids" and snowy peaks.

Eleanor at first seemed to mend. Then she had a little increase of fever, and then a little increase of weakness, and then fever again. And the English doctor pronounced her state to be "extremely unsatisfactory," and called in another physician of eminence; and they puzzled over Eleanor's condition, and talked of English travelers, and foreign politics, and looked out at the Rhone, and went away, advising Emma not to allow her sister-in-law to be alone, as in the state of debility in which she was, if she fainted, without some one at hand to attend her, it was doubtful whether the action of the heart would return, which half-understood announcement terrified Emma exceedingly, but could not add any thing to the tender care she already took of the invalid.

It was the evening Godfrey was expected to return, and Eleanor, who had been getting gradually weaker, was lying in a sort of doze. Presently she spoke, half opening her eyes.

"Sing that again—sing that again!" said she. "Emma, beg Margaret to sing that again!"

"Your head is wandering, dear; no one is singing, said Emma, gently and compassionately.

"I thought I heard music: I certainly thought I heard my dear Margaret singing 'The Land o' the Leal.' And now—I know it is a fancy—but it seems to me I hear the waterfall, down the rocks of the roaring Linn at Aspendale!"

"Oh! that you really hear," said Emma with some eagerness, as she rose and moved to the bedside. "That is the rush of the Rhone, you know, sweeping past the hotel windows; I have been watching it; it is so lovely in the moonlight."

"Yes; it will be lovely, too, at sunrise!"

And Eleanor sighed, and closed her eyes, and seemed to doze again. Emma returned to her place by the window; there was a dreary pause. It was broken by Eleanor; she moved restlessly; she spoke in a strange, altered voice.

"My good little Emma," said she, "don't be frightened, but I feel very ill—much worse—call my maid."

Emma rose and obeyed; she looked at her sister-in-law as she passed hurriedly to the door of the ante-room to summon the attendant, and she then saw in Eleanor's face that expression which, like the first look of love, even those who have never yet beheld it never can mistake—the look of DEATH.

Emma felt dreadfully frightened; she shook from head to foot: but if she had not her husband's nerves and sternness, she had his exact sense of duty. She knew it was her duty to be useful—to struggle with her fear; she strove to think of God and heaven, and not of the agony that intervened. She opened the familiar pages of her prayer-book at the prayer for the dying; she knelt down trembling by Eleanor's bedside.

"Tell Godfrey I thank him," said the latter, faintly; "we misunderstood each other often; but I thank him; give him my love—when he returns."

When he returned! She felt she should not see him, brief though the interval might be!

A few sentences were read by Emma; then Eleanor started and moved.

"Lift me!" said she to the maid. The woman raised her. She looked wildly upward and stretched her arms. "Emma," said she, with a glad, soft smile, and in a louder voice than she had yet spoken, "I see my children; I see them as plain as I see you! There—there—waiting for me! So near—and yet so far!"

The smile wavered, faded a little, and then seemed to become strangely fixed, as with a sudden heaviness she dropped back in the arms of the attendant nurse.

"Eleanor, my dearest!" said poor Emma, in a choked voice.

But Eleanor heard no more! Song, and speech, and the sounds of weeping, and the rush of earth's rivers and waterfalls, were over for her. She was gone from the changeful, imperfect affections of fallible human friends, to that merciful Creator who allots such various destinies to his creatures on earth, but gives them one sentence for the hereafter. "Those who do well to the resurrection of life, and those who do evil to the resurrection of damnation."

When Godfrey returned, he found all over, and Emma alone in the hushed death-chamber, sobbing bitterly. She addressed the poor, pale corpse, though she knew it was death she gazed on.

"Oh! I hope my children may be like you—I thank you for your many kindnesses to them and me," sobbed Emma to dead Eleanor.

Godfrey entered, and Emma's tears were checked. She was always awed by her husband. He took her hand. "You should command yourself," said he. Then he walked to the bedside, and looked sternly and sorrowfully on the face of the beautiful dead. The strange peace of her smile met his gaze; it seemed to say, "I was miserable once, but now I am happy." He sat down and covered his face with his hands. After a pause, he rose; and, taking a turn with folded arms in the room, he stopped as he returned, and said to Emma,

"It is for the best! God's will be done. With her propensity to error, we should look upon her as taken away from the evil to come."

For he made himself her judge, even then!

So Eleanor died; and they buried her at Secheron, where, in the midst of the blue, boundless space, and among the free, everlasting hills, the dead lie inclosed, each in the narrow prison-house allotted them—watered with few or many tears; remembered or forgotten.

And to the end of Godfrey's life—even as by that mournful death-bed—he constituted himself the judge of his fellow-creatures. It was the defect of his nature; and in the weak guiding and training which alone he received from his mother, he had not been taught to control it. It had been suffered to grow with his growth, and to strengthen with his strength, and it never left him till his own death-hour.

CHAPTER LIV.

A FAREWELL TO THE READER.

ALL the characters in this book, like Godfrey, retain their distinctive peculiarities. None are dead but Eleanor, and nearly all, when they think of her, think themselves better than Eleanor, and better than those others who have different faults or misfortunes.

Duly does Godfrey go twice to church on Sundays; devout is his conviction that he is a good man; entire and unbroken is the respect for him which his neighbors entertain, and the love for him which his timid wife preserves. All the children accompany their father to church—down to the last little one that can read. Severely does he punish any little curly head that looks up, or yawns, during the long, incomprehensible service; awful, in his family, is the idea of "offending papa"—more dreadful than the fact of doing wrong, which puzzles simple Emma; for she feels, much as she reveres Godfrey, that the fear of Heaven should somewhat predominate in the children's hearts.

Tib also goes to church very regularly. Even when she has a bad cold in her head (and Tib is

very subject to snuffling colds) she orders out her carriage, and is trotted gently to the church-door, and goes rustling into her pew lined with crimson cloth, and furnished with crimson cloth hassocks, and looks round triumphantly at the rest of the congregation. Even bad weather does not stop Tib. The only difference is, that she has the bays out, instead of those handsome, restive grays that require such skill in driving; for she don't care so much about the bays taking cold: and the coachman encourages it, for when the bays go out, and it is a wet Sunday, he makes the second coachman drive. So they come out all sleek, and covered and shining, with oil-silk coverings over the hammer-cloth, and the servant's hats, and take gorgeous Tib to church. Especially in the country, Tib says, people ought never to miss church, but "set a good example to the poor." And certainly if Tib's example be of any use, it is impossible the poor can be otherwise than impressed by it; for they all stand gaping in the road as the great, glittering gaud goes by, which they know is the *tout-ensemble* of the Countess of Peebles going to divine service; and when the women put down their pattens at the church-door, and give a glance at their gowns, hoping they have held them tidily up all the wet way that they have trudged to answer in person the sound of the Sunday bells, they are perfectly well aware that Tib's example is gone in before them, and hardly refrain from courtesying as they pass the crimsoned-lined pew, so great is their respect for Tib.

And Tib thinks of Eleanor with a mixture of spite and contempt, and has no very clear idea of what happened lately, but knows she is dead.

And one of Tib's lions, a poet-lion (for they are not so worldly-wise as the other lions, and not near so wise as the tigers), is foolish enough to ask Tib after young Lady Penrhyn; of whom he is reminded, he himself scarcely knows how, by the scent of heliotrope and geranium, and the want of a lovely face to rest his eyes on, in the weary crowd at one of Tib's parties. And Tib feels as though she ought to blush at being asked after an unhappy creature who was separated from her husband and died in retirement; but Tib can not blush, so she rubs the end of her nose with the tight white glove which covers the fat hand the duchess used to worry, and she answers sharply that she knows very little more than that she is dead, and that "of course," after she left Sir Stephen Penrhyn, she, Tib, saw no more of her. And then she rustles away from him, half because she is offended and confounded at being asked after Eleanor, and half because she sees the young Duke of Cambridge coming in at the door. And the poet-lion is disgusted with Tib, and in his heart he calls her hard names; and he thinks what a lovely face Eleanor's was, and what sweet eyes she had—eyes made for smiling, which yet must have wept so much; and he don't believe a word of Eleanor's being a wicked woman, for he trusts in expression, like all poets; and Eleanor at last seems to rise like a vision before him (poets being able to raise visions as the witch raised Saul), and he mutters something to himself about "haunting eyes," and "a cruel world," in the midst of which, gorgeous Tib rustles back, and seeing *him look gloomy, and fearing* he may be displeased, and withdraw his leonine presence from her future parties, she stops, and asks him to dinner for the next Thursday; and the poet smiles, and accepts, and comes to dinner, and gets green peas, though they are not yet in season, and sends Tib some very pretty verses "On Spring," and forgets all about Eleanor.

And I can assure the anxious reader, that Tib continues a career of uninterrupted prosperity, and fortune cherishes Tib, and helps her to climb on in the world she has climbed into, and teaches her to "improve the shining hour," by perpetually cutting old acquaintances, smothering old friendship, and forcing herself on new introductions. And the little Dagon is taken such care of, that he promises to be nearly immortal. Still does he come out, like hermetically-sealed provisions for a yacht voyage, unexpectedly fresh and brilliant; his neat little head, with powder scattered over it, like the bloom of the plum Still, though he no longer dances, there is a shuffle in his feet, and a snap of his fingers, as he sits in his chair watching reels being danced at the royal balls (for Tib goes to all the royal balls, and her motto is "Who but Tib")! And her Dagon dare no more interfere with her or her preferences, or question her conduct, than he would dare walk about in a hail-storm; and when she does not want him at home or abroad, she sends him to bed. And he loves his Tib, and is proud to see her come sailing toward him, to order him to bed, arrayed in satins and diamonds; and he is a happy, though rather a cowardly little Dagon, and never thinks of Eleanor, or of the day when he was put *en pénitence* at Castle Penrhyn.

And Lady Macfarren also goes to church, and says her fierce prayers, that resemble the service in Ember week of God's commination against sinners; and she glares angrily during her brief, rare visits at the Castle, at Bridget Owen, for Bridget Owen is now Lady Penrhyn, and her son is legitimatized under the Scotch law, and is heir to the Welsh property, and the Scotch property, and the little church-yard at Carrick, which holds the grave of Frederick and Clephane; and Sir Stephen has quite forgotten all about Eleanor; if she is dead, why, so are a great many other women he knew long ago; and though she was very beautiful, she was not fond of him, and his marriage did not answer, and he'd much rather be as he is now, if the neighbors and Janet would be kinder to Bridget.

And Bridget and Lady Macfarren have fierce fights, and Bridget won't go to Glencarrick, and lets Sir Stephen go there alone in the shooting-season; handsome Owen is as insolent as possible to his wrathful aunt, goes to Glencarrick as a favor, and says he "does it for company for his father, and don't care if he never saw the Ogress again," and by the Ogress he means his Aunt Janet, who can not prevent his calling her an Ogress, or his being heir to her brother, though it drives her wild to think of it.

And Tib, being wiser in her generation than the Ogress, makes friends with Bridget, for she knows that her yacht provisions can not last forever, and that some day her Airle will be dead, and Sir Stephen be Earl of Peebles, and Bridget his Countess, and she only dowager-queen of old-maids. So she coaxes Bridget, and they drive together in the summer in Hyde-park, in

a beautiful open carriage, and the ladies look at Bridget from under their parasols, and pretend to scorn her, but, in fact, many of them envy her in their hearts; and the gentlemen ride before, and behind, and on each side of the carriage, trying to get a glimpse of Bridget, and they say she is perfectly beautiful, and very original, and has the most bewitching little Welsh accent in the world.

And Bridget is as happy as the day is long, though she is very jealous of Sir Stephen; for she really loves him, and meant to be true till death to him, even if they had not married; and she is sorry for her insolent days, when Eleanor was Lady of the Castle, and is very kind to old Sandy, who has come back to die in his native place, and is bed-ridden in one of the cottages.

And Lady Margaret goes to church also, with pretty Euphemia, whom David has prepared so tenderly and carefully for her first communion, and with a little girl called Eleanor, the eldest child of her second marriage; but not with her two little boys, because she thinks them too young. And she thinks of Eleanor with deep tenderness and enduring love, and humbly prays to Heaven to enable her to do her duty: fearing to love David's boys better than the child of her youth; fearing all things that she thinks are a dereliction from the straight path, and yet walking in it ever, with a pure and earnest heart.

And she and the Duchess of Lanark talk of Eleanor as they turn from the church-door at Carrick, and the tears sometimes rise to the duchess's beautiful eyes, to answer the bitterer gush of weeping that Margaret can not always forbear; and the little duchess has almost entirely left off coquetting, and has taken a new tone, and says she "would not change her noble-hearted Lanark for any man in Christendom;" and noble-hearted Lanark is perfectly satisfied, and "always felt sure she would steady and get rid of her one fault," and thinks it so pretty to hear her lecture her little girls on vanity, and never even wakes to the consciousness that the generosity of his trust perhaps saved her from sin, or on what a thread it hung at one time, whether she would be a *femme incomprise* with lovers, and lead a vile life even under the sacred roof of her own home. Nor, indeed, would the little duchess herself admit that there ever could have been the chance of such a frightful termination to her vanities; but she owns that she has been more touched and governed by his trust, than she could have been by lectures or control of any sort. And the vain little sylph, though she loved and pitied Eleanor, still thinks herself superior to Lady Penrhyn, inasmuch as she was never parted from the duke, or had any open quarrel, or shocked the world in any way; and the world continues perfectly satisfied with the Lanark establishment, and so do the Lanarks themselves.

I

And David Stuart?

David is still beloved by his adorable wife, and is master of Dunleath, and of her good true heart. The Duke of Lanark is fond of his brother-in-law. No one insults or mortifies him with the disgrace or misfortunes of his youth. No one knows the story of his love for Eleanor, he never told it to a living soul, nor did she. Godfrey did but conjecture half the truth, when he presumed his sister's preference for her guardian. Margaret believes herself to be the crowning joy of David Stuart's life; believes it, and deserves it, but is not! There is a cold pain in his heart, which even her warm, glad smile shall never sun away; there is a memory which all her beauty and all her charms can not avail to shut out. Eleanor—his Eleanor—whom he loved and injured, haunts that home of his youth, for the regaining which he risked her fortune, and ruined her future. He looks on his own child's face, and wonders if Heaven will yet further punish him by creating misfortunes for *her!* Will she, too, make an unhappy marriage? and so, struggle as she may to do her best before God and man, find life shattered into days that shall resemble the fragments of a broken mirror, that never can unite again to give back the perfect image of peace? Will he be able to guard his own child from misery? he that failed in his trust with the daughter of his early benefactor!

He loves that little girl the best of all his children; though she is not so handsome or glad as the others: he loves that pale, energetic face, with its frank and noble smile, so like her uncle Lanark's. Her name is Eleanor, too; Margaret wished it; she was born the year after Eleanor died, when Margaret's heart was heavy and sad for the loss of her friend. She understands her father's moods: she knows his mournful days; she sits often on his knee by the Greek sun-dial in his silence; neither grieving nor comforting, but conscious that he is sad; leaning her little cheek against his, as they watch the sunset together; and the shadows pass over David's heart, even as over the face of the dial. Sometimes, as they sit so, they hear Margaret's pleasant laugh under the old firs, where she is playing with the boys. And, oh! what lovely boys they are, those two glad children! How, when their miniature by Thorborn was exhibited, mothers smiled and murmured over the representation of their beautiful faces, and eagerly looked out the number of that picture in the catalogue, and found it inscribed:

"Portraits of the sons of David Stuart, Esq., of Dunleath and Ardlogie, and the Lady Margaret Stuart."

But the waves of the ocean of life have closed over Eleanor; and the grass is green on the grave of the little joyous Frederick, and her gentle, pious Clephane!

THE END.